

# CutBank

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Fall 1976

## CutBank 7

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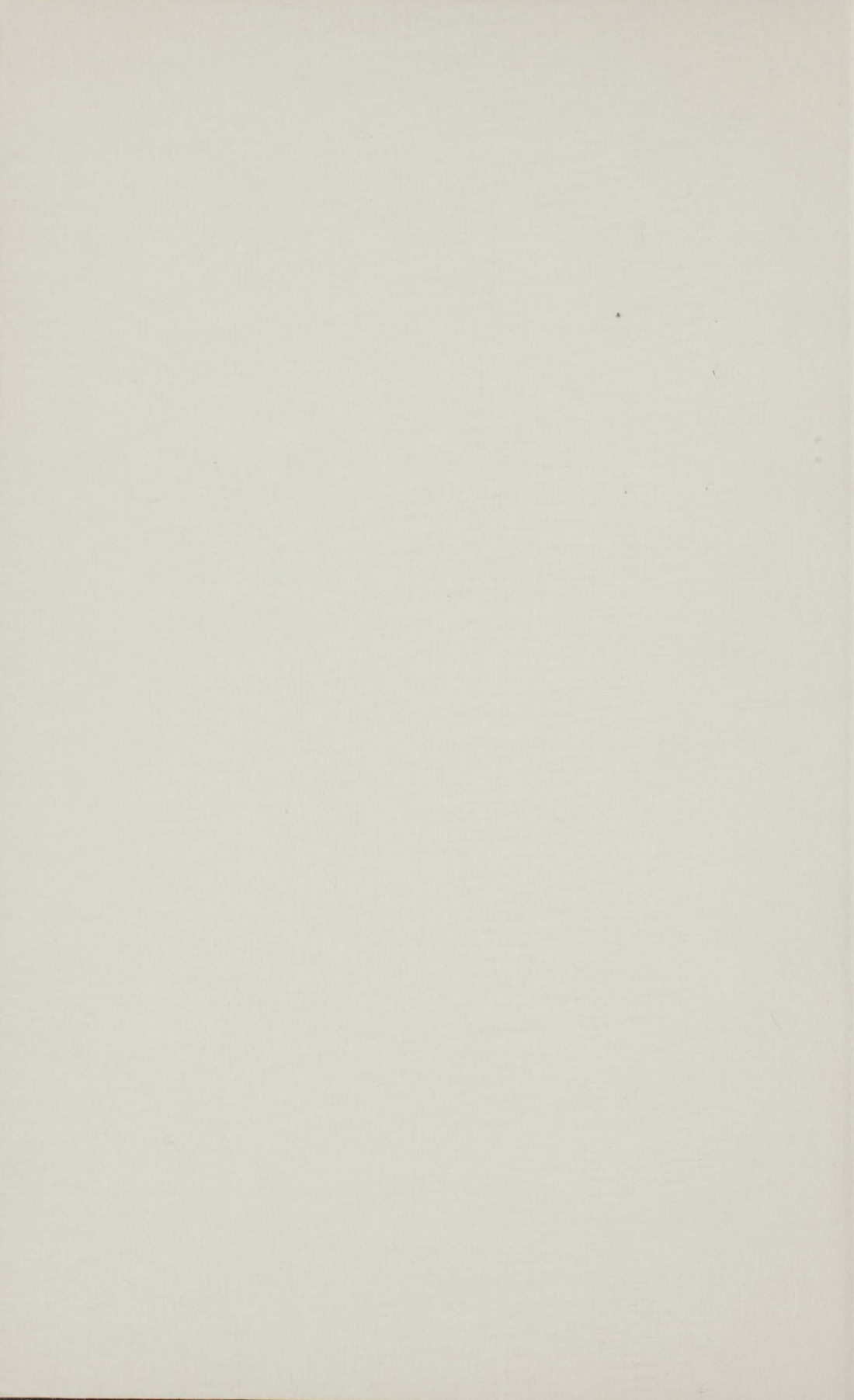
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Cut Bank  
7



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Cover by Jacqueline Svaren

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The editors are pleased to note that two stories recently published in *Cut Bank*,  
*"The Rowboat"* by Clay Morgan  
and  
*"Standing Alone"* by Jim Heynen  
were listed as "Distinctive" in  
*Best American Short Stories*.

## ISLAND

*for Gala FitzGerald*

I

I know this island.

A wind from this moment blows the light off the sea,  
the far crests flinted with silver.

A seal eases from its ledge in the wavesmoke.

Bushes and stones stir and brighten.

A kingfisher hangs in the air, rapidly beating its wings.

It was here the dream began.

I hear the old voices,

the island loud in the stones and rattling nighthawk,

the silence of the yellowing brome

before the wind picks up toward evening,

tethered seeds like small boats along a pier.

The surf makes a rush and whorl round each feather  
of the goose barnacles.

Sieved plankton whistle thinly as they die.

The woman who came from the gray rock  
goes before me in the dream.

Call her bridgemaker, weaver of the far wave:

in her name is the promise of return.

But I must go it alone like the hemlock

pulled over in the last storm and tilting into the surf,  
barnacles and pennants of moss on the raw limbs.

Waiting to cross, each runnel appears

deeper than hell, each trough holds a thousand coffins.

I see a pod of killer whales out on the Sound.

The small boatmen are in danger of swamping.

If the waves say anything, it is

*Go now. Leave your shell*

*as foothold for the young.*



II

I had no skin  
only bones and the veins draping them  
like fishnet on a gunwhale.

I stood in the mantle of a wave,  
waiting for my body,  
shivering.

Strangers came, seal faces,  
ravens overhead complaining,  
crabs with their swivelling eyestalks.

*Fear makes a bad meal,*  
I heard one say,  
*Let the sea cure him.*

So they left me there  
like driftwood  
or fog on the headland.

III

I fell asleep in the gray moss of the waves,  
the great moonweeds, swaying and toppling.  
It seems I entered a shell or the turreted silence  
of the ocean. It's hard to recall—  
the moon was young then and closer,  
I could discern its work in the ribs of diatoms and the hardening chalk.  
I slept a long time in the drift of those skeletons.

IV

Far on the rocks in the fog  
the gulls were crying.  
Over the steady wavechant  
I heard voices and oarstrokes,  
men calling the blooded kokanee.

That night I joined them  
in the aldersmoke and starlight.  
I stood in a circle without fear  
listening to flutebone and rattle  
as animals walked from the fire.

Beyond the glinting sealrock,  
I saw children and salmon  
on a ladder of moons.  
Song was to help them  
from crescent to crescent,  
so I raised my voice with the others.

From then on, sleep was broken.  
I tumbled in the wrack  
without a body of my own.

V

He came again, the one who'd spoken, he tended the waves  
as if they were a furnance,  
sunkiln he called them.

*These are the only masks  
worth having, he said,  
these wet guts, these fishbones.  
Knowledge is breath and change.  
You may never leave the wave  
so make your body of its breaking.*

VI

Though you fall away in the dark,  
fall without hindrance  
from ledge to ledge, the moon making  
short work of whatever distinction  
your face had,  
though you fall with the faceless bodies,  
the crescent scars of your own nails  
on the thighs of the victims,  
though your maggot vanishes and you never find it  
on earth again,

say to the tall grass, the delicate seedchains : I go looking  
to the lichen-spotted groundling nighthawk : I go looking  
to the deadly angels, the veiled amanitas : I go looking  
to the crests and blazons of all lifechains : I go looking

VII

A shearwater dives, sheathing itself in light.  
The wave rides forward out of the sun  
and, with it, all I will ever love—  
the hemlock where the heron perches, a shred of fog  
that loosens and moves slowly off,  
the light changing from green to pewter, changing constantly  
as the elements respect no division,  
the purple crabs scrambling through the sedge in great numbers,  
decisively as under one command,  
the seal, the woman, the pivoting surge of the sea itself,  
that moon-leashed leviathan,  
and the tall, crowned grasses striding toward death.  
With these I lean toward what I know  
and will come to know as I listen  
to the voices of the island:

Pulse after pulse  
the sun drives the bloodscrews, the wedges of beginning  
into each crack of time.  
The seal laughs in the wave,  
the sickle moon cuts and cuts again  
these cliffs. Nothing stays.  
Not grass, not water, not even the sun.  
Praise and pass on.



## MONET IN THE FIELDS

How I paint these haycocks is how I remember  
    you and Manet in the garden  
    painting Camille, with  
such different  
eyes you saw her, in such a wholly different  
    light. How he would look  
    at you and grimace,  
or whisper  
so you could hear: "This Renoir, he's no good.  
    You who are his friend, tell  
    him, please, to give up  
painting."  
When we could, we had to pose for one another,  
    we were so poor: Courbet  
    on the strand at Trouville  
for Whistler  
whose mistress sat at her toilet for Courbet.  
    I did Manet at his easel,  
    and you, I posed for you  
that summer  
while I painted the garden behind our cottage.  
    Such ways of seeing then,  
    so mine now. And you  
must not  
go back to thinking that truth is only in form  
    and line. No, think truth  
    is a room without  
furniture;  
you say this is so: first, a red damask chair.  
    You add geraniums, and it  
    changes. You add a sofa,  
then images  
of Muybridge's old horse running in the center  
    of one wall, each one a facet  
    of the truth but not  
the truth,

and him sitting on the sofa beside the geraniums,  
    you add him, he is the man  
    who makes the horse run,  
he is true:  
he is everything and the room composes itself  
    to his impression of it,  
    and it all changes or  
remains  
like the lake at Argenteuil shifting from blue  
    to green, with one catamaran  
    or none. Manet was joking,  
friend, you  
have always had talent, and it hurts me to learn  
    that you have taken up form  
    and line, like  
Ingres,  
that "bourgeois Greek" (as Whistler called him),  
    you, with such an ample  
    eye, painting  
fleshy  
ladies in the old fashion, of which I disapprove.

## SUCCESSION

*for my mother*

I slip into your sweater,  
the yarn, a ganglion  
of nerves.

I slip into your dress.  
The cuffs close  
around my wrists.

The collar lies  
on my chest  
like a thick vein.

Now I'm in your hats,  
coats, gloves, each one  
folding back into my body.

I slip into your blouse,  
the buttons dissolving,  
the buttons, black tears.

The threads unravel,  
crawl into my arms,  
spin dark

green cocoons.  
Just beneath my skin,  
wings are beating.



## SHADOWS

I stepped out into the yard on a warm October evening, just before dark. I forget now why I went out, perhaps for an armload of wood, or just to check on the last of the sunset, the oncoming night sky. In those days when I had done eating or sleeping, the natural place for me to go was outdoors.

I hadn't been out long when I saw what I at first thought was a large, dark leaf blowing towards me in the dusk; but there was no wind. It brushed by me and disappeared behind the house. A few moments later it returned, darting erratically overhead, and again went out of sight, this time down the road toward the river. I thought for a moment it might be a late swallow, but it seemed too dark and strange, and the swallows had long since left the country.

Again the strange visitor fluttered past me in the semi-darkness. I suddenly knew it was a bat, that there was more than one, perhaps two or three. I went to the house door and called to my wife, Jo, to come and see them. Out there in the warm dusk now slowly edging into night, we both stood and watched. It was impossible in that light to keep track of them, they were simply too quick. As soon as I had one fixed in flight against the sky, it flew down into the darkness of the trees and vanished. A queer, jerky flight, a little like that of a butterfly, but stronger and swifter. We watched them for as long as we could see, and then went back indoors.

Looking among the animal books on my shelf, I found a section on bats, and began reading. I learned that the earliest fossil bat dates back to the Eocene, "95 million years after the first bird flapped through the Jurassic skies," and long after the last flying reptile had closed its wings. Their teeth and skulls were similar to early monkeys, suggesting a common ancestor. The writer went on to say that bats may be our earliest relatives in the non-monkey world.

Only two kinds of bats were to be found so far north, and they were thought to be limited to the southcentral part of Alaska, two or three hundred miles to the south of us. I soon concluded from my reading, and from their size and flight habits, that our bats were the *Little Brown Myotis*, one of the commonest of North American bats. I read that they slept by day in caves, old buildings and hollow trees; in deep

dusk they could be seen flying near water, or at the edge of the forest. And what I read seemed to be true, for here they were in the dusk, hunting our cleared spaces among the birch trees.

The next evening I was walking up the road to mail a letter; it was again warm and still, a little air moving over the hills, and the light was a warm gold on the river channels in the southwest. I soon saw a bat flying back and forth, up and down the roadway, swiftly changing altitude in pursuit of the insects that were still abroad.

The warm weather held another day or two, then turned cold with that suddenness of fall, and the small bats did not come again. In my ignorance, I wondered where they had gone. Had they really flown south, far south on those frail, umbrella wings? How could they pass the mountains through Canada, or survive the coastline, the stormy gulf? Or had they found a crevice in a rock nearby, or a hollow cottonwood, folded their wings and gone to sleep for the winter? I was never to know. I thought about them, and wondered what it would be like to be there with them, to hang upside-down in the darkness and cold, waiting for spring; perhaps to freeze and never awake. "They have few enemies. . . bad weather is one of them. When not hibernating, they seem unable to endure long fasts; protracted cold, windy, rainy weather that keeps insects from flying, causes considerable mortality." Snow came soon, and the year plunged deeper into frost.

There are shadows over the land. They come out of the ground, appear in the air around us, in the shapes of leaves and flying things. Tree-shadows that haunt the woodlands of childhood and fairy tales, holding fear in their branches. Stone shadows on the desert; cloud shadows on the sea, and over the summer hills, bringing water. Shapes of shadow in pools and wells, vague forms in the sandlight.

Out of the past come these wind-figures, flapping sails of lizards with terrible teeth and claws. Shadows of things that walked once and went away. Lickers of blood that fasten by night to the veins of cattle, to the foot of a sleeping ape, or man. In the far north, where mastodons walked, and their fur-clad bones still come out of the ground; triceratops feeding in the marshlands, by the verge of the coal-making forests.

Shadows in doorways, and under the eaves of ancient buildings. Shadows cast by icy branches against the windows; they rattle on the



glass and wake us, trembling. And there are shadows in the heart of any person, old ghosts that will not die. They rise and fly into walls built there long ago. Of the life that was and is not now, only these still-seeking shapes that live where we do not look.

It is Autumn; leaves are flying, a storm of them over the land-brown and yellow, parched and pale — Shelley's "pestilence-stricken multitudes." They fly in our faces and scare us; they whirl and spill into other shadows, to lie still, waiting for the snow. These shadows wait for us wherever we are, shadows of the end and the beginning. Stand still and look. And sometimes a shadow so huge it covers the land, moving in like night itself, and makes a night of its own.

The following year in late September I hiked down into Banner Creek from Campbell's hill, on my way home from hunting. I stopped briefly to look inside an old frame shack left behind on the hillside by miners a few years before. It was evening, near dusk, and the light inside the shack was poor, but I soon saw something dark hanging on the wall near a window, halfway up from the floor. I walked quietly over to it and found a small brown bat clinging to a crack in one of the boards. I had no light and could not see clearly any details of the creature, but it seemed similar to the bats we had seen the year before. I had a momentary impulse to pick it up and carry it outdoors where I could have a better look at it. I decided not to disturb it; I might learn more, but it was not worth the risk of scaring or injuring the bat. I looked around, then left the shack and quietly shut the door. The door had been closed when I came, and the bat had apparently entered through a hole or crack in the eaves, or by a broken window pane.

A week or so later two or three bats again came to the yard on a mild evening, and flew about as before until long after dark. When the warm nights ended they once more left us. They visited us in this way for perhaps three or four years, and then as mysteriously as they had first appeared, they stopped coming. I cannot remember having seen them before or since. During that same period, there were scattered reports of bats seen in the evenings near Fairbanks by people who did not know they existed so far north. It may be that some subtle shift in their migratory habits, or a change in the climate of the interior, a change so slight we did not notice it, brought them there. And then, like so many other events in our lives, perhaps there is no explanation at all. They just came, and then they left. Be glad.



In spite of all the folk literature and old wives tales, the terror of my mother and grandmother at the very thought of having a bat in the attic, I felt no uneasiness in their presence. Years before, while an art student in Washington, I had come home late at night to the roominghouse where I lived. As I climbed to the landing on the second floor, I saw a large bat flying up and down the corridor. I stood still there; it flew swiftly, avoiding me each time it passed. I remember now opening a window at one end of the corridor before going on upstairs. "They are not witches . . . they will not try to get into your hair. Like most animals and some people, what they want most is to be left alone."

Although surely indifferent to our presence, as all wild things tend to be, they seemed in that far, northern place, remote from attics and belfries, to be warm, curious and friendly little beings, whose lives momentarily touched our own. When they did not come again I felt something was missing in the October twilight. Sometime after they first appeared I wrote a poem called "Shadows." It began:

In the evening near the end of summer,  
when the yard is quiet,  
the small bats come,  
brown leaves in the twilight. . .

## THE BEACON

The Olympics break  
in distance across the Sound.  
The rigid lines never fade. They are hard  
to get beyond. Still  
I think west to Destruction  
Island, an old station of light.  
The tower looms dark with something I have  
to remember. A hermit  
lives there, tending the light.  
I row toward him, pulling the weight  
of my brothers, their hands  
making easy trails in the phosphorus glow.

I confront the hermit alone.  
He has been here since I was born  
and his time is up. It is my job  
to bring word of his replacement.  
He shuts the door  
in my face and I close my eyes.  
There is no movement, the distance  
heavy between us.

## **YOU & LESLIE CARON**

You are Fred Astaire in SOMETHING'S GOT  
TO GIVE. You are dancing in tuxedo & skimmer through  
one of Leslie Caron's bad dreams. It is a dream

in which washwomen lurch from closets  
brandishing dustmops, clumsy paper stars pinned  
to their hair, & you backpedalling

with your hands raised as if to bandits.  
In another instant, another few frames, Leslie Caron  
will metamorphose by the luck of the dream

into a caparisoned Egyptian goddess, Hollywood style.  
Her famous full lips will be shellaced red like  
some enormous fake fruit & she will

be writing a letter in laborious characters,  
triangles & crumbling obelisks, each phrase requiring  
pages. Each deft stroke of her hand

will be like the uncurling of a delicate white snake.  
She will be singing in French.  
While you, you will be forever dancing, doomed

to dance. Your bright heels, sparklers in the dark,  
they will be as if yellow disturbances  
on a black background, as if a child with crayons

had conceived his private schemata of stars  
& connected them with lines. For this, you  
dance in the dark. You clutch a mop by the throat.

Your hands are cold with sweat.  
As if the dazzlings of your heels made, in  
randomly sprinkled dots, the ghost figures of bears



& crouched lions, of does the color of caramel  
pushing tentatively through a wood,  
sniffing the night sky. And Leslie Caron

in Egypt, dabbing her nose under lights in  
a blank room, she prays to you, the dancing fool, miscast  
in starlight at the dog-end of a dream,

your shuffling, circling heels.

## AUTUMN CLEANING

An ordinary whiskbroom it was, one of those jobs  
wound with copper wire. Perhaps bearing  
a tiny wooden disk on the handle, Old Man's

Cave, or Coover Dam. Your mother tells the story  
of your hiding it under the floormats  
of the Oldsmobile Super 88 where it would

not be found for weeks. This is the same Oldsmobile  
in which, years on, you will coax  
Marilyn Ryan to the shredding back seat

where stuffing spills onto the floor like dirty  
urine-stained snow, & someone has left  
a jackhandle, two empty cans of oil. Marilyn

Ryan wipes steam from the window with  
a Kleenex, rubs her nose. God but you wish  
the car-radio worked. Your mother wants to know,

standing over you huge as a tree going yellow,  
why you've suddenly become practical.  
Behind her the Motorola brays so loudly

her skirt & apron seem to flare out with wind.  
You watch her mouth clap open & closed.  
This is Autumn, time to take the whiskbroom

to the inner recesses of the cupboards where  
dried crumbs & coffee grinds sift over the dark  
shelves like leaves in an empty lot at night

seen from stories up. Your mother will  
be on her knees. She will appear jammed to her hips  
in the cupboard. Stacks of boxes, jars beside her.

You, smiling to yourself on the linoleum  
floor, you will be scooting on your palms as if  
at only five years old attempting

some prodigious dance to the commotion of  
the radio, as if you knew all along the wiskbroom  
was hidden safe from all harm, the music

too loud, the autumn arbitrary, bright, cold.



## THE ROOM

### I

There is a band of last sunlight over the driver's eyes.  
He grins into his knuckles on the wheel  
turning into streets you do not recognize.  
You, with a sandwich in a paper bag, you  
are trying desperately to remember the number of a house,  
the name of a street, a landmark, anything,  
before the driver swivels around with his yellow palm out.

### II

Always the same: a phonecall at home at  
an unreasonable hour—you then on a curb at dusk or near dusk  
clicking your fingers, still tasting mustard and onions.  
There are boys in gray alleys  
orchestrating a tenement of tincans. There are women  
with their chins to sills, dim as picture postcards from  
a literary parishioner. And your stomach  
rolling—you've a nose for symptoms, signs. Finally

### III

under a solitary streetlamp where a puddle stands  
full of orange peels fragrant as leaves  
you climb onto the cement, make a bad joke, tip too much.  
Upstairs there is a woman in a terrycloth robe  
& puffball slippers running over the heels.  
She opens the door, starts talking at once.  
A cockatiel squats on the table like a lump of smoke.

IV

And you, with a sandwich and pistachio nuts in  
a paper bag, your legs will shoot off the tiny bed,  
you like a moth nailed to a card,  
your blue socks fastened at the calves, your knees like snow.  
You will hear water running in a next room  
and your hands will hang huge to the floor.  
While this naked rolling woman speaks hurriedly into the phone.  
You breathe in and out, you've arrived, you wait for deliverance.

## FIGURES WAITING AT A STATION

You ride the 6:03 to the last station  
where a short man in pantaloons steps out to  
meet you, takes your suitcase & hat.

The two of you, as the sun drops over  
a shed wall, exchange clothes. His pantaloons,  
too small, ride your hips like

jodhpurs; your slouching trousers lap  
behind him as he shuffles away, disconsolate,  
a red figure carrying packages

against the sunset. There remain for you  
nearly two hours till the next coach  
& the Coca-Cola machine is busted,

blinking by a wall. In that time, while  
a man calls off numbers, there will  
be a woman in smudged peach lipstick cutting

columns from the leaves of a paper. There  
will be an overhead humming fan  
coated white with dust, turning, like

velvet blades to complement your  
costume. You will content yourself to lean  
against a wall. Your shoes will pinch. Outside,

miles off, your train will just be clearing  
a rise, gaining speed. A brakeman whose  
weathered face glances from the slotted

side window will be absently unwrapping  
a sandwich, smelling the newmown  
fields racing into the dark, the first stars.



## EATING ALONE

This good woman comes home, her breath  
visible in the emptiness of the house.  
She lights a fire, a cigarette,  
cups it in her hands as supper warms.  
She needs two hands to cover hers,  
she tells herself  
always. The smoke rises above the house,  
disperses, and stands at the windows.  
Even in the chilly air, even with the thin  
transparency of smoke, with the untouchable  
frustration of nothing, we see her face  
down on the bed crying until supper is ready.  
Her visions are too large for her to handle  
alone. They throw her face down and make tears  
march out of her eyes. It isn't fair.  
This is a good woman. Strong and proud and private.  
More smoke. Her breath invisible at the table,  
she imagines the phone ringing, the wine  
half gone in the other glass. Fog comes in  
along the river like an amazing highway.  
The smoke rises to greet this other smoke  
coming into camp with hands full of beads.  
She wants to leave, she is going, the dark  
cover of fog. She thinks of the weariness  
stacked up inside her after eating alone.

## FROM MOTHER

—Today I'm feeling a little better  
my legs are a little bit better  
your father's throat is also better  
but of course he can hardly speak  
and last night I threw up again  
in the bed and I wet the bed  
and your father who can't hear a word  
and doesn't understand a thing I ask for  
yes it's difficult when one can't see  
worse now when the spring sun is stinging  
my hands which grope and grope  
but one must be glad and thank God  
there are others who have it worse.

Though it's rare that anybody drops in  
o yes Signe was down and whined  
yesterday yes Siwert was drunk as usual  
if only she didn't get so hysterical  
as soon as he takes a nip  
but she yells and screams and goes on  
and suddenly he gets mad  
she had a bandage, you know  
as big as this on the back of her neck  
he had beaten her she said to the floor  
but we fortunately don't hear anything  
and as I said to Signe be glad  
there are wars and worse misery.

One can think—yes think about Aunt Ida  
as she saved her social security and pinched and scraped  
and didn't allow herself to eat  
now they will take all of it in the nursinghome  
where she sits with her horrible hooks  
of hands and hooks of feet  
but of course she has it quite well where she is  
there are many who have it worse.

Though of course one wonders and asks sometimes  
why some people have to live like that  
year after year after year  
while others like your brother for instance  
he who was so handsome and happy  
it's lucky that Elsi didn't die too  
when she threw herself on the coffin and screamed  
and screamed when they screwed on the lid  
o how he played and sang  
newly married and Elsi with the little boy.

But best what happens  
best also for our little Baby  
best that she got peace poor little thing  
and to get this old and hardly  
be able to keep going no just barely  
that is not much of a life  
but one must still be grateful  
there are many who lie lame  
yes everything is for the best  
little Sonja we shall not complain  
no, one should be glad and thank God  
there are many who have it much worse.

*Translated by Inger Casey and Lee Bassett*



## AN EXERCISE

Color the sky blue, light blue. Add a splash of orange or purple and three birds, gulls, flying. Imagine a cabin above a steep bank. Add a heap of rocks, indiscriminate debris. Account for music, or call it that. Adjust the seasons to match your mood and wash a dull gray over everything. Add twists of seaweed, spits of sand, a waterlogged log thrown up on the shore.

You are in a boat.  
The boat drifts below a cliff. You are alone in the boat. Twilight. Let the tide turn. Don't adulterate the scene with unnecessary detail. Take back the sea or the sky. Take back the cabin on the cliff. Blot out two of the gulls. Permit the one remaining gull to dive toward the water. Improvise. Have him fish. Have him catch fish or have him fail at his fishing. It makes no difference.

## THIS

This is the hour of dawn  
the mountains appear  
transparent. Nothing wants  
to matter & when my wife turns she whispers  
about the two of us hidden  
inside her, about November & its small  
relenting birds.

Sometimes before sleep  
I stare at the ceiling until  
it changes. The cities  
mice build there for themselves  
are enough. Each drop of rain  
on the rooftops of old trees  
is enough. I curl like an unborn child  
& sleep.

At dawn the sparrows  
stir with songs. Voices from eggs  
rise in the mile-high haze  
& wait there. The autumn migrations  
leave these young behind.  
They'll sing of this winter  
as theirs, traces they live with  
in trees growing, the ceilings  
that belong,  
& this is all it is.

## FERRY RIDE

(Puget Sound, Washington)

The great boat glides by,  
a red kite on an unseen wire  
wavering behind it like an afterthought.  
We move between worlds: the water  
a blue field ferries plow,  
sheened flat enough by sun  
to walk on; the land, dark  
with hemlocks wrapped in their boughs  
like monks in winter. Our thoughts  
are full of semicolons, ride  
invisible wires before words flag out  
at their ends like kite tails.  
Our hearts, locked in our bodies  
like two lamps in a footlocker.  
We stare hard at the darkening water,  
the gulls' throats as they wheel and sob,  
and when we dare, each other.  
As far into the night as the engine,  
boat's heart, beats below deck,  
we glide toward each other—waves  
that cross—and leave our echoes,  
the thrum and clangor of bells  
under the water. We lock  
in the dark between moons,  
beat our hearts from hiding;  
then kiss, turn our respective cheeks,  
and give ourselves to every moment  
that we sleep: our lives, in dream,  
two rows of lights winking  
off a long pier toward the sea.



## TAKING LEAVE OF FRIENDS

(Lake Union Dock, Seattle)

A spot picked at damp random  
to break through: the line of docks  
spattered with creosote, workmen  
hosing down a seaplane on the fritz,  
silence in the beam-strewn yards  
between warehouses. How will we get out  
of this one? you ask the red ant  
toppled from a rusted cable to your thigh.  
Migrations are the mainstay: a gaggle  
of honkers lined up on the shore,  
calls hollow with tundra, thawed ice  
booming under all-night sun.  
Long sad distances unravel  
from their bandaged throats.  
Strange currents catch the skirts  
of your thoughts on the updraft.  
You forget time here, forget rhyme, reasons  
for coming, half your name. Who could ask  
where you're going, who would you change  
your life for, whether you'd put a bookmark  
in your heart and rise and follow?  
Who would know how true you are, no matter  
what the year, no matter what the rip tides  
of your blood washed in? Clouds  
piling up on the horizon show you  
who your friends are, love  
the outbound bus you climb aboard,  
your strongest word goodbye.

## ALADDIN LAMP

With luck and the slow hand of the lover  
I polish the lamp  
to its antique glow. Over the ring of incised  
rectangles where the double wick climbs  
I watch the girl  
dreaming by firelight. She plucks  
the burning pitch from coals, lifts it high as a torch  
and escapes the small brass picket fence  
into the next century.

Nothing goes on but the fire. Swirls of opaque  
roses caught in a slender chimney.  
Clear at the heart of the globe's  
Victorian shade  
she runs with leaping tongues, the steady beat  
of the trackstar. Small legs  
pumping down the block  
into the street where skaters gathered and past  
the great beetle light of the tropics.

Wood spits in the andiron grate. What do apple logs  
know, too old to catch fire? The pale observer  
shudders from the cold room  
toward the milky dawn of Chicago. She says,  
If I kicked over the lantern would the man up late  
notice? Already the hillside moon  
lifts a gnarled trunk in its tongs. Hurricane  
sweep of barn and town. Sky  
in the window blazes.



## THE RECYCLED WOMAN

Even before I joined the convent I was a stickler for detail. Now, over the wall and on my own, I still suffer from the strategies that kept me there. I find it hard to believe that authority figures are not God, their faintest wishes beamed at me in radar warnings. I should have lived in a Swinging Singles pad.

Most of my notions of a world untroubled by Thou-shalt-not's were based on the few adult movies I had sneaked into in the Thirties. Or on the Arabian Nights. Women diving into champagne pools, I told myself, had little to do with *my* life. But the Nights were far enough removed in time and space to make them anything but lovely. Besides, I wasn't sure what touches of my own had established an interior rich with damask and brocade, scarlet and purple velvet. Rugs so thick they tickled your ankles and made you swoon with pleasure once every hour instead of giving you static nylon shocks. I could see myself falling, gracefully as in the St. Mary's Academy pageant, where I was one of twelve Vestal Virgins in the Roman episode. We did a torch dance with real flashlights, placed in metal cones. Red and orange cellophane flames shot patterns onto the darkened stage. I was the last to swing my torch in a wide arc before balancing on one knee to light the Sacred Fire. After that I had to sink to the floor without thumping to make room for the Dance of the Hours.

In the Arabian Nights, nobody would have to worry about awkward noises, insulated as they were with cloth of gold. You could fall all the way from the spangled chandelier with no thought of breaking your collarbone.

If you were opposed to falling, you could wear a diamond in your navel and a ring of rubies just below the knee. You could drape yourself over the circular divan, looking like a painted odalisque, very high class.

Of course I knew that *I* couldn't afford such luxury, but I might find an attic forsaken by a student artist whose genius matched the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. He would have had huge conceptions but too little money to carry them out, and after living for weeks on



cold potatoes so he could buy brushes and paint, he would have poured out all his undeniable loves on the cold walls and plaster ceilings of this studio-apartment.

If that seemed unlikely, there might be a photographer's den, rich with carefully-lighted nudes. And if the students had grabbed up all the arty digs, I might discover a tastefully sensuous apartment whose absent owner wanted someone careful, preferably an older woman. I would luxuriate in muffled privacy, thick carpets and real bearhides on the King-size beds. I would get up to make my own breakfast in the soft glow of hidden lights and go back to the goosedown quilts for enjoyment when I was ready. I would stay up all night if I chose.

Instead, I found this Spartan ground-floor apartment the other side of the border, heated by an Olympian fireplace on a diet of rationed wood and lit by dim orbs whose principal feature is their refusal to unlight unless you are willing to risk third-degree burns and electric shock by unscrewing the bulbs.

Because of the view, I took the apartment without seeing it, lured by assurances of privacy, a writer's dream, Mrs. Beane said over the long-distance phone. The Beanes had planned a Mexican trip, and I would be the guardian of the hearth. Once I had seen the view, the disadvantages seemed slight: twenty-three miles from campus; access by way of a nearly-vertical drive, the turn possible only from the left; ugly, uncomfortable furniture. The only honest representation on the wall was a map of the peninsula. I scarcely noticed the Indian brave's Appeal to the Great Spirit or the framed pastel hounds dedicated to scents no more serious than Evening in Paris.

My landlady, citing a husband who can do anything, is stuck with the story that there isn't enough power to turn the lights off. My own interest attaches to switches installed at every convenient location although you have to climb straight to the light source to snuff it out. Stumbling through jungles of cut pampas grass and elephantine armchairs, I imagine flopping on my bed to aim a six-shooter at the offensive globe. Instead, I meekly climb the nightly chair, my barked shins less frightening than the impulse to bite the hand that feeds me.

And it *does* feed me: beets whiskered as the kelp that makes them grow; cabbage heads larger than my own; brussels sprouts mud-bathed in rich rains and requiring hours of patient washing; pole beans that go on like the lights- forever. Leeks, sliced thin to bake, buttered, in the oven I use each evening with a growing sense of guilt, aware that Mrs. Beane cooks two days' meals at a time to hoard

energy, soaks her laundry in the sink and agitates it in a machine that works only on spin. (This by way of telling me why I must take *my* washing to the laundromat.) Mrs. Beane doesn't really feed her laundry to the broken-down washer, but stands by while her all-powerful husband coaxes it through its one working cycle. Then she hangs the cloths on outside lines, flung on pulleys across the gully.

Although I must patronize the laundromat three miles away, I am free to borrow Mrs. Beane's antique vacuum cleaner and her floor polisher as often as I wish. I look uneasily at the rubber-tiled floor of an institutional design I have lived with in five different convents. It reminds me of the thrice-weekly massage that kept the surface underfoot a continuous hazard. Back there I used to think levitation was the answer, but in this heavy air I will have to find another way of rising.

Mrs. Beane makes toast on top of the stove because her toaster sputtered out with the lesser galaxies some years ago, and the toaster-oven she admires costs an enormous amount—thirty-five dollars or so. Meanwhile, the versatile husband, a 77-year-old retired electrical worker, simply denies whatever he can't manage.

"There are no flashing amber lights," he says in response to my question about advance warning signals near stoplights on the thoroughfare from north to south of the island. And for him, there obviously are none. Two months later, his vision suddenly expands in keeping with his godlike role. He remarks as if we had just opened the subject, "Oh, *those* amber lights . . ."

I discover that I have neglected to bring the heat-diffusion ring for by glass stove-top percolator. After combing the town for one and being told that I must buy a coffee pot to get the star-shaped wire, I consider the risk of putting the pot directly on the burner. As I am wondering aloud in my landlady's presence, she urges me to ask her husband. It must be hard to deal with all these mortal petitions. His advice: "Put it on the flame, and if it breaks, you'll know you can't do it." His eye winks dangerously, but by now I know it is just a nervous tic.

Already it is time for the Beanes to move their furniture for the winter. Every spring in their quarters upstairs, Mrs. Beane arranges the living room sofa and chairs so that their occupants can look out, like so many small-town hotel ghosts, at the placid faces of the sea. Just as promptly after the first heavy rains in November, she reverses



their direction to avoid the fog-bound, angry scowl of sea and sky in favor of the more eloquent fire.

The shed is piled high with bark and driftwood. Garden vegetables pulled up and sifted for seed, yield their dry remains to the compost heap. The house, under two coats of lemon-yellow paint, flashes through Canadian maples and untidy fir. In the cellar, wine ferments on schedule and beer bubbles in its dark bottles. Everything is in order.

The Beanes make me feel like a misplaced person. Here, where a fiat is a shower drain instead of a car, my Latin background and my weakness for oracles make me think the landlord gauges the water I use each day. "Fiat," the subjunctive "Let it be done," has the force of "Turn it off!" It interferes with the luxury of my morning shower. I find it hard to believe in the scarcity of water with so much of it outside the window where I sit in my red, high-backed chair gazing at the channel. When I tour the island I am surrounded by it, and if I manage to lose sight of water in some dense stand of trees the skies open and it falls on me. Even so, newspaper articles warn that the outlying towns will need ten years to collect money enough to bring Victoria Pipelines to the Saanich Peninsula.

On my third day in the apartment, Mrs. Beane knocks at the door. She is wrapped in a faded beach towel and wearing sneakers. She invites me for a salt water dip. "It's good for you," she says, "you can't study all the time."

When I am ready we look as though we should trade bodies or bathing suits. Mrs. Beane's brown skin is leathery and freckled. Under the bleached towel, her weathered suit may once have been purple or orange. My suit is a modest blue, one-piece, and this is the second time I've had it on. My legs, breasts and shoulders are white and foolish.

The shock of the water makes me furious. Mrs. Beane looks at my goose bumps as I come shivering into the sun, determined to wear my suit only for burning on the boathouse dock. After that, Mrs. Beane swims alone.

Our next social event is a walk along the beach. I talk mostly about how slippery the rocks are, and when we emerge, as if by chance, in a retired military backyard, she introduces me to the Major and his British wife. We are obliged to stay for tea, ritually prepared, and nearly as weak as our conversation. On the way home Mrs. Beane



confides that the neighbor has asked, "What's your new tenant like?" From then on I become wary of placing myself on display.

On a weekend, the Beanes' daughter, a divorcee, arrives from Vancouver. She invites me for a get-acquainted walk. I avoid any reference to my life as a nun and manage to come off as some sort of recluse with unexplained gaps in knowledge and experience. All the Beanes' tenants have been strange, so I can't hope to be the one exception. After a brisk three-mile loop, she comes in for a glass of wine. She brings the subject round to the downstairs plumbing.

"Mother worries that you're afraid to mention it. She thinks she hears running water."

In no time Father has arrived with his tools to take charge. Once satisfied that leaks are checked, he joins us. Noting the vacant hearth, he asks, "Are you out of wood already?" I conclude that firewood, too, must be rationed, as if we lived in a world eternally at war and had to husband its resources like patrons withdrawing small sums from their life savings. I relinquish my single shield against the dank cold and aching rheumatic joints. I am afraid to turn up the thermostat, set at fifty, remembering the old strict rules against meddling with room temperatures. Superiors often assumed personal charge of regulating the heat or delegated that duty to the sister with the coldest, most ascetic blood.

"It's lovely down here, isn't it?" Mrs. Beane asks. She is wearing a red cardigan that must have fit her fifteen years ago, and slacks with patches on both knees that remind me how her husband hates the garden. "He's the builder and I'm the gardener. I try to get him interested, but he can't tell the weeds from the turnips. We lived down here three years while he finished the upstairs." Her eyes are on my bikini pants drying on the radiator. I used to wash them every night but have lately taken to doing them in the shower.

At a party, the boss's wife tells me how the natives once put bricks in their toilet tanks or flushed them every third time to raise the water level enough to get salmon back to their spawning grounds. Now, that crisis past, I listen to the sound of Mrs. Beane's morning rituals in bathroom and kitchen, faucets snapping back into place as if they were elasticized. I become acutely conscious of my addiction to coffee and of the frivolity of my bladder.

Elsewhere, waste creates another kind of problem. The Beanes do not have a disposal service. Everything organic and raccoon-proof

goes into the compost. Fat and bones find their way there only after being purified in the fire that also reduces paper and twigs. Plastics, so far as I can ascertain, are taboo, and tins, flattened, go into the seawall.

"A hundred years from now, they can try to figure out what kind of civilization this was," Ted Beane muses, though I mustn't call him Ted. The day I slipped into that one, Lucy, whom I must not call Lucy, asked sharply, "*Who?*"

At first Mr. Beane believes that I am one of the many public servants squandering his tax dollars. Otherwise, how could I stay at home much of the day when the University has hired me? But as he listens to my typewriter early and late, as he notes the hours I spend engrossed in reading, his passage by my window unmarked, he is less openly critical. He is even considerate enough to make a wide swathe to avoid distracting me. More than once, I look up from a period of concentration to see him standing there at the window, his hands full of mail.

"I didn't want to interrupt," he explains, and a wave of affection sweeps over me, turns my customary annoyance into guilt. The old man may be headstrong, but there is something gallant about him that I can't help admiring. I will have to spend more time with people and not imagine myself a martyr.

Ted clears a space in the woodshed for my car, a necessary space in this humid region, he explains. I have just learned to negotiate the drive and the sharp turnaround without beheading small trees. I can even get by the gallon wine jugs hung from the peach tree to discourage raccoons. After thirty-five minutes I pretend that I am inserting the Nova into the shed with a shoehorn. It works. I am light-headed with triumph. I have not even scraped the paint. I gather my books and discover that the only way out is through the double roof of car and shed. I have missed by three inches, and the car door will not open. It is still possible to back out, and I try. After spinning my wheels on the loose dirt and gravel for several minutes I move enough to hit the three-inch drop from the drive and stall. Ted comes to my rescue: Jehovah as parking attendant. He has difficulties with the idle. He races the motor, abuses the power brakes and power steering. I consider the burden of being God, develop a sudden interest in flora and fauna, think hard about my auto insurance.

The next evening I park in my old place in the grass just off the turnaround. The day after that, Ted knocks at my door to offer his



garage. He will park his Olds in the shed because I use my car more often. Besides, it's likely he will be in Mexico.

I soon learn that the garage is only a slight improvement on the shed. A concrete floor for traction, but the paved approach does not quite line up with the garage opening. On the left side, sharp rocks belly out from the ledge that leads up to the shed level. On the right is a drop of several feet. Mrs. Beane, wearing a ruffled 20's blouse under her brown shirt, leans on her rake and watches me from under the high-crowned straw hat. To focus on the garage mouth lures to the savage rocks. The same is true for trying to avoid the drop on the right. The driver must angle in, then straighten out sharply enough to leave garage walls intact, along with the tools hung there. It is clear that Ted regards convenience as a temptation to flabbiness. Like the Ancient Rule, he finds asceticism reassuring.

Because of the safety hazards on wheels or afoot, we have an arrangement that calls for their turning on the yard lights shortly before I am expected home from evening classes. I become fairly skilled at juggling umbrella, books, flashlight and door keys, the entrance to my apartment being on the channel-or far side of the house, whereas theirs faces the road. When they hear me flip on the lights in my apartment they turn off the outdoor ones their side of the house. Timing is everything. They listen for the sound of my engine and grow restless when I arrive more than five minutes late for whatever reason.

As a consequence, I feel obliged to let the Beanes know when I am going out for the evening. Mrs. Beane always comments on what I am wearing. "I don't think I've ever seen you in the same outfit twice," she says. "How did you get all of it in the car?" Knowing I must predict my return within thirty minutes at most, keeps me from enjoying the party. I begin to turn down invitations rather than submit to cross-examination and a timetable rigid as the IRS.

I've already learned more than I wanted to about these interviews. Because her husband's deafness is a handicap, Mrs. Beane interrogates prospective tenants. The apartment had been empty, but the local news reports lie heavy on the civic conscience: so many students without housing. They rent the space, not because they need money, but to help out in the shortage. Ordinarily, they wouldn't even consider me—a short-term tenant—but they may take a winter holiday, and someone must look after the house. The young man who



checked out the place for me would like to live here when I leave. His mother says he plans to marry the blond young woman who came with him. I make no comment on this one because I know the marriage is a fiction invented to meet the Beanes' standards of respectability. They would never consent to let their house and name to anyone living in sin.

The last couple to make a home here stayed two years. Mrs. Beane was glad when they moved because they had become a burden. *He* wanted to sleep until noon on Saturdays, and, besides, he was always trying to tell Ted how to build things. Imagine that, a young man—not halfway through his thirties.

"I told Ted he should just go on with his building, but my husband isn't that kind of man," she remarks. "He wouldn't use the saw or the hammer until the bedroom shades were up in the apartment."

I learn to live without my usual alarm and get up with the Beanes and the birds. By the time Ted walks to the beach to collect what the sea has delivered I am in my red enamel chair, meditating at the typewriter. And though I have turned my back on the Indian brave, I am sniffing out a trail with the watercolor hounds.

The water shortage has taught me the difference between duration and intensity. I am having twice as good a shower in half the time on one Sunday morning when I hear somebody trying to kick in the door nobody uses. It is the door near the frosted window, just outside the bathroom, and if I don't do something quick it is going to break down. Maybe the house is on fire. I take some time anyway. The top storey will be the first to go.

I step into a towel and go dripping over the cold floor, open the outside door a crack, and peek out. Mrs. Beane is there, hands full of chard, swinging one foot against the door to call me from the shower. I am tempted to reach out both hands and let the towel drop.

"I knew you were in the shower, but I thought it might be too late if I didn't come now." She lowers the greens thoughtfully to the floor. "Are you going to church this morning?" She knows I go every Sunday, but she wants to know what time. Ted is not a churchgoer. She really misses talking to her friends. Her church is on the way to mine, and it starts half an hour earlier. She will visit with the parishioners afterwards while she waits for me to pick her up.

My hair is still wet when I head for the garage, buttoning my blouse and then my coat as I go. I haven't had coffee, and nausea overcomes me in the car where mothballs from Mrs. Beane's fur coat and hat

leave her vocal and uneaten. I roll down my window and drive with a drowned fury. "We hardly ever bother to dress up out here in the country," she says, "but it's nice to be a lady for a change."

My landlord informs me that I will not need a telephone.

"You'd just get it in and it would be time to take it out," he says. I listen quietly but decide that a stay of nearly four months requires a telephone. I do not know how to explain to the public that I can call out but no one can call in, because Mr. Beane has cleverly hooked up the downstairs phone as an extension of his own without consulting BC Tel. He has even saved the outdated directory from the strange young woman who preceded me.

I consider it unrealistic to expect more than semi-privacy so long as Mrs. Beane's hearing does not "de-teary-ate" to match her husband's. Still, I am twenty-three miles from campus and have classes only three days a week. The same secretary who told me I wouldn't need to buy a park-anywhere sticker for my car ("You can just walk across campus from the lot on the other side of the Ring. I do it every morning.") insists on my putting some figures in the blank marked *Home Phone*. I buy a park-anywhere sticker for \$15, taking care not to mention my investment to the secretary. I have evening classes and hope to avoid the dark walk to a distant car.

As for the phone, I tell myself that in *this* life I do not need permission from the superior to make a phone call. I am, after all, more than fifty years old. The Beanes do not know about my former life. I pay my rent. I am not a teenager, obliged to take phone calls for a five-minute maximum in the Beanes' kitchen. After making arrangements with BC Tel, I inform Mr. Beane that the installation is scheduled for September 7. Then I go about my teaching.

On the seventh I come home to find the work order for my *four-party* line. Yes, the Beanes are one party. Mr. Beane explains that he headed off my arrangements. "There's no use in putting in more lines. . . nothing else available out here." I wonder who determines availability and decide to make an act of faith in the landlord. I assign a new equivalent for the B. C. part of BC Tel, but revise it when I discover that the company is less antiquated than I thought. The four rings are on different frequencies, and if I hear my phone ring, it's for me. I have kept the turquoise Trimline that was already in place and am billed six dollars for color. When I call to protest, the company representative tells me to deduct two dollars. I consider it a moral victory.



With the phone comes the burden of new knowledge. The previous tenant, a very odd woman, kept the phone on the hearth instead of on the telephone table. The homemade table looks as though it's wearing stilts. It is in a corner darker than a booth, with only firelight to read the directory by. I move the table to the bedside for my tensor lamp and keep the phone on the overstuffed chair to muffle its ringing when I am not at home. In that cement enclosure with the barest of rugs to warm the rubber tiles, its volume grows to the size of a civil defense warning.

One morning when Mrs. Beane knocks with my mail, she urges me to accept a postcard invitation to a local art show. The studio belongs to the daughter of a wealthy department store owner. I am used to having Lucy or Ted comment on postmarks, handwriting, senders' names—even suspect them of keeping a file of my correspondents, much as they count the number of times my telephone rings. They speculate on the cost of long-distance when a friend phones them to ask whether I am out of town. *Time Canada* arrives erratically: they may read it first. I begin to notice any delay in their trips from the mailbox to my door, much as I used to resent the hours incoming mail remained on the superior's desk, especially when letters came to me slit open and she referred to the contents before I had a chance to digest them. I mention casually that a friend is coming to visit me and will probably stay overnight.

"The one from Missoula or the one from Iowa?" Mrs. Beane asks. I smile, remembering the spidery handwriting of the man from Iowa, his way of leaving off the return address. I would like to have one reader give my poems the attention she reserves for my postmarks.

On campus, my colleagues are convinced that my timid approach comes from being too isolated. They hint that I need the security of a cloister outside the walls. I decide to be reckless. When my friend arrives I invite her parents to dinner. They ask to bring a relative. The relative has appendages, one of them the young man who lives in sin. I prepare dinner for eight and ask some of the guests to bring dishes and silver.

Among the guests is a hyperactive nine-year-old, the sinner's nephew. Together they defeat all our efforts toward quietude. At ten o'clock I bid my guests a nervous good-night and signal them to safety on that dangerous drive.

The next day, sauntering past Mrs. Beane's lawn chair with my friend, I report cheerily on our trip to the art show.



"I even bought a drawing," I volunteer, "a charcoal nude—very subtle—in a white frame."

Mrs. Beane's response has nothing to do with art. She is disturbed because my guests made too much noise. The child is totally undisciplined. She will never rent to anyone who knows him.

"That boy would be here all the time," she concludes before starting over again. "My husband was so upset he couldn't sleep." She repeats it like a litany.

I announce that we are going for a walk and draw my friend away. Embarrassed as I am at Mrs. Beane's outburst, I am relieved to have my report of the supervision authenticated. I hide the Nude in the closet where I keep my portable Olympia and take her out each evening after the shades are drawn, ignoring subsequent hints about not having showed the picture to the landlady. Now when I enter the apartment the innocent nose of the hound tilts to a sinister wind.

As the season advances I find the prescribed morning exercises more difficult. I have a disc problem and must strengthen my back muscles. I place my folded afghan like a prayer mat on the square of worn rug and sink to the hard cold floor. Rheumatic joints move to the swish of Mrs. Beane's polisher.

All this domestic fervor overhead creates a high gloss in which I see myself reflected as a slattern. I look around at the heaps of paper on every surface. I study the cloudy floor. Rehearse the hazards of those grim machines in corners where tiles have broken with the groundswell and Mr. Beane's do-it-yourself floorplan. What purpose will be served by spreading cement dust over scuff-marks and scatter rugs? Besides, Mrs. Beane is using the polisher. She will vacuum next. And I will get rid of those three sardine tins and the forbidden plastics.

I manage to find the seawall by the simple expedient of walking towards the sea, but the cans elude me. I am reluctant to pursue the matter, so I carry mine in small brown paper bags and drop them off in the various shopping centers, as if I were a conscientious tourist refusing to litter. Or I get rid of one bag with the detergent box in the laundromat, drop another in a campus garbage can or wastebasket—wherever I find a handy receptacle in a week's rounds. The day after I leave one in the white container intended for soft-drink bottles outside the Safeway store, I return to find the lid padlocked in place, the opening barely large enough to accommodate a Coke bottle. Behind the stores in the shopping center, large signs

appear: *For store use only. Illegal to deposit garbage here.*

I take my wine bottles to the recycling center, not for coffee money, because up here, recycling is "a way of life" rather than a commercial venture. My sense of duty, just beginning to ease up, recovers its wartime strength. The department secretary keeps several boxes behind her chair for various kinds of paper: junk mail, old telephone directories ("I will also have your one from home," says her memo, typed on the back of a Used Books circular), discarded envelopes—anything that need not go through an intermediate shredder before reaching the ultimate one. When anybody makes the mistake of using the wastebasket, she assumes a martyred expression and dives for the castaway like a sparrow hawk.

I do well on this one because the convent has taught me to think of wastebaskets as containers that must be always empty. It is so much more godly that way, and I have become a compulsive wastebasket emptier, putting gum wrappers, ash tray leavings and lesser dust devils through a series of paper bags arranged in a trail leading to the alley. The impossibility of getting people outside convents to cooperate with this arrangement demands frequent small compromises.

An employee from the telephone company arrives to check my phone. He makes various adjustments while conducting a cheerful commentary. I put the new directory he gives me on the overstuffed arm beside the turquoise telephone and take the old book to the secretary for recycling.

Next to Watergate and other American political scandals, Mrs. Beane's favorite topic is Americans' conspicuous consumption. The larger the passing sailboat, the more determined she is to identify the American flag, using binoculars if necessary to make sure.

Because *my* consumption has the interest of proximity, she brings back the years I had to ask the superior's permission for every purchase, no matter how small. If the superior said yes, the bursar was supposed to give me the money. Then it was up to me to choose wisely and report back to the superior with an accounting. If she was not too busy she might look at the bra, the girdle or the shoes I'd bought and give me some advice if I hadn't been a careful shopper. No wonder I sagged into limp foundations and fallen arches.

Mrs. Beane is fascinated with the amount of coffee I manage to put away. She passes along everything she can scrape up on the harmful effects of the coffee bean, including a special find on how it raises cholesterol. I have confessed that I must watch mine. This is one topic



on which she does not defer to her husband. She has a nursing degree and even worked in a hospital for a year or two before she married Ted. The day her eyes travel away from our doorway conversation over a bunch of beets, to the seven two-pound cans I use for canisters, she looks like the special prosecutor discovering forty-five new reels of tape.

"How much coffee did you say you drink?" she asks for the fourth time. When I explain that I don't keep a record, that the tins are just storage places for staples, she looks disappointed. The Beanes—Mrs. Beane anyway—are less interested in the details of my life than in their version of them.

She falters for only a minute. *Somebody* had to drink all that coffee before the tins could be emptied. I hide my thermos under the sink and begin to smuggles groceries in after dark or when the Beanes go up-island for the day. I would like to know the precise moment of *their* return, but they are the owners, the lights all on their side. And they are quick to detect the advantages of my not knowing whence they come or whither they go. Mostly, I hear about these trips after they come home.

"*You* had a man down here," Mrs. Beane says suddenly in the middle of an offering of winter pears. "I heard him!" I feel the flush in my cheeks but I hold my eyes steady. "Your husband?" I ask innocently. Then I remember the telephone test. I can hardly believe her remark. Some matters are too serious for jokes.

A four-day weekend is coming up, and I consider going out of town until the Beanes inform me that they will attend a veterans' reunion in Vancouver. I can't believe my luck. It's the best thing that has happened since they promised to disappear into Mexico. Or it may be a trial run for the Great Mexican Adventure. A test of stewardship, perhaps, like Fidelio's journey, entrusting his wife to a friend. I have been thinking about the medieval romance and I like to make up the parts I don't remember.

I assure Mrs. Beane that I will not be afraid to stay alone. She shows me where they keep the fire extinguisher and leaves an emergency phone number. The morning they drive away, the November rains begin, not the customary ten-minute showers, but the coastal torrents. I slog through rivers of mud to the woodshed and return three times with a wheelbarrow load of wood. I try to take the least distinctive logs in case Ted has them memorized. I pile them in the space outside the bathroom because the only window there is



opaque. Then I telephone all my friends and talk for a long time, my transistor spilling out country western, which the Beanes hate, my feet over the arm of the overstuffed. I glean my own letters from their sheaves of bills and dull house organs. The next morning I steam in the shower for thirty minutes, soaking through the stiffness.

I take the Nude out of the closet for the entire weekend, amused that she covers the Indian over the fireplace. At night I prop her on my dresser while I read in bed by the light of the tensor lamp. It's a long way from the odalisque but I stick out my tongue when the hound shows his teeth and turn his muzzle to the wall.

On the third day a friend stops by for a drink. The sun, out for a few minutes, gilds an orange sailboat, framed in my window. "God!" he explodes, "What's the matter with you anyway? This is a *great* place to live." Sure enough, the Beanes come back half a day early.

"We were thinking about you the whole time," Mrs. Beane says, looking towards the bedroom where the shades are still down. Or the woodshed, which is in the same general direction. Her eyes come back to the fireside, cold ashes and one scrawny log. "How did you like being all alone?"

"I had a man down here," I said.

When I come home for dinner the next day they are waiting for me. The new tenant would like to look at the apartment, but they wouldn't think of going in without first letting me know. I am tired, hungry, and not sure whether I have done the breakfast dishes and put away my nightclothes. But I am tied to my benefactors by a green length of string beans. I acknowledge the introduction to a young Chinese woman who teaches at a neighborhood school. The Beanes withdraw, but I know that anything I say will be monitored from above.

"Mrs. Beane says they're going on a Caribbean cruise," the young woman begins. "I know I'll love having the whole place to myself." I whisk my nylons from a hanger on the fireplace screen and into a drawer.

I open the closet, forgetting about the Nude, but the tenant sees her and accepts my explanation: "This one is mine. I'm just getting ready to pack up for the trip back to the States." She studies the drawing for a long time with a cool eye.

"Is it cold down here?" she asks.

"Well, I think you'll enjoy the fireplace. I usually have a fire in the evening." Let experience teach her. My noble impulses are running

out of fuel.

"The refrigerator is cold," I say, opening its door to show her all that space. "And you'll really like the range in the kitchen."

WHATEVER YOU SAY, WHEREVER YOU ARE  
*for Rick Heilman*

Birch and maple bow, giving themselves back  
to the ground this autumn, and every walk  
through leaves begins the clatter of all  
that lies detached. Something from a river  
in that noise: the voice calls, coming at you  
in water bending speech around the rock.

I hear you tonight in the scuff of heels.  
Whatever you say, I risk believing:  
the room you sit in now, the gold decor  
and light, children, a young wife, anything.  
Whatever you say follows like a bell  
ringing itself. Bell of autumn walking,

bell of incense and our First Communion,  
bells of longing—the bell these fourteen years.  
I sit down at the bank and your words  
catch current in the stream. My feet stalled,  
I wonder at my trust of shoes,  
*their ever-walking toward*, a dream of meeting you

some Sunday at the store. You'd buy your smokes,  
turn, walk out, and there we would be, agape:  
longest gone of friends. But all the leaves  
are fire now, candles burning low and rising  
as our voices rise. The prayer of priests here  
drowns out whispers in the fresco, breath

of saints. This Mass they celebrate for children  
lost at night, carried with the fish to sea.



## POEM WRITTEN AT DAWN FOR FRANK PALUKA

A desk before a window.

A prism sits in its willow frame. Beside it  
Are two yellowed postcards, a pencil and stick-matches.  
Light passes through the prism, breaking down  
Into colors that are steady: there's green,  
Violet and yellow. Outside everything is thawing,  
And deep in the woods crocus and skunk cabbage  
Are growing from the center of actual slabs  
Of color:  
The open, black and indigo sides of deer, breaking down,  
A cadaver of deer everywhere!  
(Much of two herds starved in the last snow.)

But there are the two postcards on the desk.  
One is filled with  
The bright conical flowers of a painting by Redon.  
The other, much older, I have  
Looked at since I was a boy: it shows

Five bathers beside the river Neva, they are old men  
And large with mottled stomachs that droop  
Like the blonde nests of Osprey-hens.  
These men are out at daybreak, all around them  
Russia is waking; with axes they have chopped  
Through the ice and three of them are entering  
The river for their swim, the other two just  
Now are stepping from the water, and it's  
These two who are  
Amazing: they are chilled, transparent,  
With here and there a swirl of blue, they are like  
Crystals of amethyst which a light  
Is passing through, the light falling broadly  
Into reds and dark yellows all along  
The snow on the riverbank, colors like in that corner

Of the room with flowers that Redon painted, tropical  
And new. But these bathers,

These nude figures, three stepping down,  
The other two ascending like in a judgement, they don't  
Belong to Redon's painting. But to a dark mural  
That is cruel and medieval. Things change!

Light passes through this prism in its willow frame.  
There are stick-matches. A pencil.  
Winter insists on detail. Things change.

## MY TRIPTYCH OF LYREBIRDS AND GREAT AUKS:

*for Paul Zimmer*

1.

There is a white stretch of desert in the heart of Newfoundland  
Near to where Strand photographed his conifer forest. I think  
The extinct great auk might still live there with only  
The wisest mothers.

I find the desert a sanctuary.

The last great auks ever seen were a couple doing  
Their silly puttering beside rocks and seaweed. They were clubbed  
To death, their large speckled eggs smashed, on the island  
Of Eldey in the first week of June. 1843.

They were murdered by fishermen who bragged later of killing  
Two witches with their yellow and red buoys.  
The sun coming up off Iceland that early morning must have  
Needed to eclipse itself with grief — there was nothing like  
This scene ever before; *and no witnesses*;

There would never be, again, another massacre of great auk,  
And never again would its fat be swallowed by sad clerks in London  
As a remedy for anxiety and heartburn.

Perhaps, the ocean came up in its awful privacy and took the  
Dead couple away; their wings broken like the oars  
Of Viking deathships  
That cut out into the icy waters, burning, while men from the village  
In their white furs stand up on the fjeld blowing horns until  
Their lungs fire

Like their gutted ships. And

Living close to the earth, we yearn, these days  
To visit even the great deserts of Saturn.



2.

The lyrebird is followed by a feathered ceremony  
Like Arthur on horseback trailed by blueboys with whistles and  
cymbals  
And two ugly Saracens, their sharp blades crossed on their chests,  
And, then, the remaining knights who were prettier with  
Girls behind them emptying wild flowers from baskets  
Over the animals' droppings and scent: in this

Manner the history of Arthur's passage out of his castle  
Over the countryside remained pleasant on a blue, airy day!

E.A. Robinson, sullen philosopher and billiard's wizard, understood  
How March becomes April, *becoming May!* How you draw down  
And away on the corners, letting the cue-ball pop against the bank,  
Settling in the center of the table that is clearing!

And then there is nothing  
But immigrants singing near the fire in the orchards that  
Are cleared of apples and deadwood. The snapped branches are  
Wounds that leak a little perfume on these first winter nights  
Of a memorable childhood. The incidents of a childhood

Like the lyrebirds' brooms sweeping the forest floor in the park  
Outside Melbourne, Victoria. There, inside Sherbrooke Forest,  
The snakes raid the nests, the fox eats the foraging hens, and  
The polygamous male makes its bubbling notes even as it is mostly  
Lost down the throat of a Tasmanian wolf. Centuries of wood-cutters  
Killed off the wolf. The lyrebird becomes numerous, and a mimic.  
It can repeat the sound of chains rattling,  
A heated saw opening a tree, or  
Even the human voice when used simply. It can repeat for example:

I AM SICK AND TIRED FROM LIVING! That was recorded up in  
the trees

In 1843, in Victoria. Once at a timber-mill, where six blasts  
Of a whistle meant a fatality, six distinct  
Reports were heard through the woods at late evening, and men came

Running from everywhere. It was the lyrebird up in the mahogany  
Copying three blasts of the chimney whistle signaling that supper  
Was ready! Trumpets, alarms and birdsongs!

The two-foot plumes of the lyrebird  
Can be silver with brown, or mauve with spangles of yellow.  
The Tasmanian wolf is gone; sometimes, in moonlight, up in  
The aspen-breaks you can hear his ghost, though, making that

Impossible cry that is extinct, that empties into  
The wooded valley waking all the animals;  
Do they realize it's the lyrebird up to his old tricks, or do  
They think: *Wolf*,

*Old friend, they said you were dead, welcome back into our lives;  
We need you for you are like our lives —*

*Empty and ferocious!*

3.

There are colonies of dovebies, or little auks, on the cliffs  
Of Greenland. They are a populous community, their only rival  
Being the guillemots.

The thought of five million little auk nests holding  
Up in gale winds off Cape York is heartwarming.

My triptych of birds, of loss, has turned toward  
Happiness like these sparrow-auks turning north as the ice pack  
Recedes past their instinctual boundaries. The North Atlantic  
for centuries, you see, has been warming up! For us it could mean  
The end of Poughkeepsie!

The Arctic fox up on the scree slopes will gobble up,  
Every so often, a little auk or dovebie.  
But these birds are increasingly suspicious of our northern gardens  
And ponds, our cats and dogs, and the Arctic fox.  
Charles Eton says the little auk colonies are

An opera house on opening night: all their  
White shirt-fronts into the wind, their black tails,  
And something like whispering.  
To the left of their nests a polar bear rears up into  
An Arctic breeze, his hair shifting, he looks out across the little auks  
And screams! These formal little birds  
Know he is pure and white like a stream, or the skins in the Eskimo  
Lodges opening,

In an Arctic summer, for days of feasting. The dovebie knows  
That the big fellows rearing up on their hind legs are not  
Frightening for they pass most of their lives asleep, and

Dreaming of the scree slopes where the little auk appear like debris.



## WAITING FOR THE DAY

That morning he was awakened by a banging sound that carried from somewhere inside his brain. The bed felt strange and he opened his eyes carefully and looked around. There was an odd stale odor hanging about the room. The staleness grabbed his throat and forced him to swallow. His mouth was dry. The smell was a very distinct one that he knew, but at that moment could not place. It was then he remembered where he was and he wondered if he had been dreaming when the banging sound started again.

It was a curious sound, far away and coming from somewhere below him. He lifted himself from beneath the warm feather tick and the cold morning air stunned his body. He glanced at the clock on the nightstand. It was five a.m. Old Popo would be up stoking the furnace. An uncontrollable shiver seized him and he quickly sunk back into the warm hollow left by his body.

He was aware of a new smell sifting through the room. It was one he instantly recognized, a smell of damp coal being ignited by burning wood, a rich pine smell. The faint sulfur tinge hung in the air as vapors penetrated every icy corner. He waited for the room to warm and for the steamed windows to bead and clear. Drops of water forming on the windowpanes left long streaks on the glass as they quickly built up speed only to end up in a tiny puddle on the dusty floor.

The dripping water intensified the urge he had to go to the bathroom and he finally had to get out of the bed. The linoleum would feel like ice beneath his bare feet and as he stared at it, for it seemed to him that every detail of this particular morning deserved careful study, he noticed for the first time the pattern which covered the entire floor—except for a hideous brown strip along the edge. Between the cracks and intertwined with them were hundreds of faded red roses. The black cracks ran throughout, giving the impression that the weight of the iron bed had shattered the delicately woven print. Like everything in his Popo's house, the linoleum was old.

The coldness bit into his feet as they searched for his slippers on the floor. He cursed himself for not setting them nearby, knelt down and

peered under the high bed. The slippers were not there, but two paths were cut through the thick layer of dust and in the center under the bed were the outlines of the missing slippers. Off to the far left and against the wall rested an old red rubber ball. He couldn't see it very well, yet he knew it was red and covered with teeth marks. There was no path to it.

He stood up quickly and the sudden movement caused a flurry of tiny dust balls to scatter across the floor. He looked in the closet for his robe, but it wasn't there. In fact, none of his clothes were. It was then that he became aware of his nakedness. He wasn't surprised, since he often slept without pajamas, but he felt uncomfortable. Things seemed to be missing. Nothing he could put his finger on—just things that should have been in the room. There were dusty outlines on the dresser, but nothing he could identify. He hurried to the bathroom thinking maybe he had been mistaken.

It was a sterile room with a white tile floor that reflected the bright morning sun. The brilliance made his eyes hurt and blink. The room was immaculate and everything in it was white with a faint antiseptic odor which irritated his nose. The whiteness made the small room glow, an eerie glow that transformed his face into a pale fleshcolored mask as he looked at himself in the mirror. He tried to *see* the room, but the white glow softened the edges of everything he stared at. He stumbled against the sink. The cold corner sunk into his bare skin like a pin prick. Its sharpness surprised him and he rubbed his eyes to try and clear the clouds that seemed to float in front of him. The sunlight was too bright and he stood out in the hall trying to clear his head.

The attic door was slightly open and he made a move to close it. He thought he heard something above him and opened the door wider and looked up the stairs. They were dark and steep and cluttered with boxes. Some of the lids were off and he could see that most of the boxes were filled with old clothes and shoes. Popo never threw anything away.

He had never been in the attic. It had always been forbidden for him to go there and he had once imagined it was where Popo kept his money hidden. As he looked at the piles of boxes, it seemed that the higher up the stairs he looked, the older they became. At the very top was an old wooden box that he was convinced held Popo's treasure. He was determined to have a look in it; and remembering past warnings, he crept up the stairs, pausing every now and then to listen



for any sign of Popo coming.

Just as he reached the top he saw a faint yellow light coming from somewhere deep inside the attic. He panicked. It could be Popo, but then he heard the old man still banging around in the basement. He tried to turn and go back down the steps. The urge to find the source of light was far greater and he continued on. He peeked over the top step and was almost knocked backwards by two huge shadows dancing across the attic wall. In the dim light they appeared as bizarre demons sent to get him for trespassing in Popo's domain. He tried to run, but his legs wouldn't move. He wanted to shout for help, yet he was more afraid of what Popo might do to him. He stood there petrified and, after a few minutes, a calm returned and he realized that whatever the shadows were, they weren't after him.

Now he felt embarrassed by his stupidity and cowardice, but he was still afraid. The fear was more from the total helplessness he had experienced than from whatever the shadows represented. His muscles relaxed and he began moving forward. He felt fear, but not from what he would find. The fear was from how he would react to any danger he might encounter.

His feet moved inches at a time. He tried to move faster, then discovered he had no control over his body. A pile of boxes was in front of him and he wanted to hide behind them and observe what was going on. Instead his body took him past the boxes and into the center of the room.

The two people had not seen him. He stood there for what seemed like hours watching until the woman finally felt his presence and looked at him. She gave the man a nudge and at first the man acted like he didn't want to be bothered, he just sat there and stared out the window. When she poked him again, the man turned around. Neither seemed surprised to see him. They stood together and he got his first good look at them.

They were small and delicate and though they were adults, it struck him that they looked more like children. The woman was dressed in a long slip. It was torn and he could see the outline of her body reflected in the light. She had nothing on underneath. The man wore an old pair of boxer shorts covered with tiny flowers. They both just stood there looking through and past his face towards the darkness he had come from.

He was frozen in this position and only his eyes were able to move.



They took in the scene as one would look at a snapshot. Every detail clear, yet nothing seeming to be of any significance except for whoever had taken the photograph. Before him was an image—a mattress on the floor for a bed and a lightbulb burning in front of his eyes, adding to the heat that was already building in the attic. A small wooden stool was under the light. On its edge burned a hand rolled cigarette, the smoke from it rising and surrounding the light then disappearing into the dark eaves. Past the still figures and through the tiny attic window he saw buildings, two story structures separated by narrow cobblestone streets. The streets didn't look wide enough for even the smallest automobiles to pass. Although he heard the wind blowing, nothing moved outside. Not even the tall poplars, yet nothing seemed out of place. His surprise was gone. In fact, he felt that he never had any. Everything was as he knew it would be.

His eyes came to rest on the two people again and he could now see them better. They were older than he first realized. Their bodies appeared as if they would float out of the room on the lightest cushion of air.

The woman's breasts were huge and sagged in the way an old woman's would. Her body glistened as drops of sweat that formed on her forehead travelled the length of her long face, down her neck and into the crevice formed by her breasts. The front of her slip was soaked with sweat and the wetness hugged every curve of her body. The wet slip clung tightly around her so that she appeared to be standing there naked. If she noticed, she gave no sign of it.

He looked down at the top of the old man's head. It was bald and covered with beads of sweat which looked as if they were glued to it. What hair he had was gray, close-cropped and stood up like the bristles of a worn out brush. The old man was staring back at him, not moving, facing him as one does a deadly snake that is about to strike. Neither of them took their eyes off the intruder's face and their placid stares forced him to start moving backwards. His eyes flashed from one to the other as their features began to harden and their skin changed from a sun-browned color to a pale opaque white. He felt uneasy as he looked down on them. Every line and wrinkle stood out like a medal from a victorious campaign. There was an acceptance of their life and that sense of pride so evident in people who have made it through life the hard way. It was a look he hated. He wanted to go to the man and shake that tiny head so that the sweat would begin to flow.

By the time he returned to the steps, the light was out and the shadows had blended back into the darkness where they belonged. He seemed to float over each step as he made his way down through the maze of boxes. The top of the wooden box was off and he saw that it was empty, but again this did not surprise him. He had never had such a feeling before. It was as if he had lost control over everything including even his emotions. All this must mean something he knew, but what was it? It wasn't that he didn't care; it was that he *couldn't* care. Something was holding him back and preventing him from discovering the meaning and, in fact, the only thing that did matter now was that he count the steps. There were twelve.

When he reached the bottom he closed the attic door quietly, but solidly, until he heard the latch click. He heard Popo in the kitchen cursing the old woman for not having his breakfast ready. Her reply was a low grunt in some foreign language, but he recognized the curse. It was as familiar to him as his own name.

The bed was cold as he snuggled under the feather tick once again. He closed his eyes and heard nothing. He listened carefully but still no sounds could be heard anywhere, not even the wind. A picture of the room appeared in his mind and he could see the room as clearly as if he had his eyes open. He visualized every portion of the room, but when he came to the ceiling he couldn't remember what it looked like. He thought how stupid it was not to remember something he had seen so many times and he wracked his brain trying to remember it. He couldn't even remember the color.

He reconstructed the room again in his mind. There was the chest of drawers, a mirror, an old photograph of someone he didn't recognize, the nightstand, but the clock was missing. He listened and couldn't hear the clock ticking. The picture of the room filled his mind again and this time the mirror was missing! He thought maybe there hadn't been a mirror. Maybe he was confusing it with the one in the bathroom. Again the picture and again something missing. Each time he brought the image back another article had disappeared until there was only an empty room, then an empty second floor, an empty house and finally no house at all! He was afraid to open his eyes. Afraid to find out if it was only a dream.

Something warm and wet was beating against his face. There was a sound of breathing that came hot and quick. He opened his eyes and there was old Blackie, her front paws on his pillow. She had the



rubber ball in her mouth and saliva dripped from her glistening pink gums. Next he looked at the clock and saw that it was on the nightstand. He grabbed old Blackie and began to playfully rough her up. She growled and tried to nip him and dropped the rubber ball. He picked it up and threw it out into the hall. She tore after it, sliding across the shiny linoleum. He watched her try in vain to catch the elusive ball and chuckled quietly to himself. Good old Blackie. He sunk back on his pillow and closed his eyes. He felt sad because for some reason he couldn't remember, he knew that Blackie would never return.

The sun burnt hot against his face. Popo and his old woman were shouting at each other in the kitchen. The smell of bacon frying drifted up to him and he felt his stomach tighten. He glanced at the clock and saw that Popo would be leaving for work soon. The window had cleared and traces of morning fog still hung in the air. The dark brick smokestacks of the mill were now visible and he watched as red smoke swept up over the lip of the stacks, across the wide valley, and sunk down again to cover the rows of tiny houses huddled together. Everywhere a crimson blush had penetrated and even the trees were trapped in a red glow that hung about them. The only trees that seemed to escape were the ones that grew along the rim of the valley. He watched them sway and bow as the fresh clean air passed through them. The red smoke moved up the valley and left behind the reminder that seemed to stain the very hearts of the people who lived there.

The smoke never stopped and at night he could see the flames and choking vapor spill into the open sky. From his window he would watch tiny figures moving in and out at midnight. Fresh clean faces entered as black matchstick bodies left while behind them glowed the blast furnaces' melting heat. Neither seemed to notice the other or if they did their thoughts remained suffocated perhaps by the red mist that always surrounded them. Above them a blood red moon shone fiercely, but for him it was a pale white disk softened by thin layers of clouds that quickly streaked across the valley.

He could remember as a child watching that devil procession and the nightmares that would follow. In particular, one in which a young man was crushed by a roll of shiny stainless steel, his blood oozing out from under the massive bulk and soaking into the dry earth. A mass



of silent faces watched the flowing red liquid as it passed around their bodies and settled into dark deep pools. The soft muffled cries of a woman pierced the darkness of the dream until they too faded into the morning. He had those dreams no longer, but the remembrance of them was still strong in his mind.

He was tired of thinking and closed his eyes hoping to return to a deep comforting sleep, but he could hear Popo in the basement stoking the fire one last time before he left for work. Bang, bang, bang! The sound echoed up the hall and into his room. It was a ritual that had gone on for what seemed like an eternity. He waited for it to stop and for Popo to climb the wooden stairs, but the banging continued in a maddening rhythm. The noise grew harder and louder until he couldn't stand it.

He climbed out of bed, went out into the hall and peered down the dark, steep stairs. Once again he felt a fear of what he would find on the other end, if there was any, but he continued to walk down. He went slowly and carefully, testing each step as if he was afraid of it giving way. There seemed to be no end to the descent, but the banging was growing louder and now there was a blast of heat pounding his body. The hot currents of air trapped him, engulfed him. He was close to the source; for by now the banging was directly in front of him. The heat was so intense that the walls burned at his touch, but he was not sweating. He finally reached the bottom and saw Popo working furiously to keep the raging fire going.

Popo's shoulders sagged from the weight of the shovel in his hands. The shovel held huge lumps of shiny black coal that burst into flames as soon as Popo threw them into the fire. Sweat covered Popo's body and collected in a pool under him. The water hissed each time his foot stepped into the hot liquid.

Popo saw him and grinned. His white teeth brilliant against his coal-blackened face. The tiny droplets of sweat clinging to his beard reflected red fire from the furnace. As he paused, he took off one of his gloves and wiped the sweat from his brow. Popo held up his hand and laughed as the black water ran off of it and onto the floor. He then turned back to his work for in those few seconds the fire dimmed and a chill crept into the room. Popo worked faster and faster to build the fire back up. Soon it roared again, this time even fiercer. He watched fascinated as Popo kept time by banging the shovel against the furnace's mouth. The coal pile seemed endless, yet the fire ate each

shovelful before it reached the center. Popo looked up and grinned at him again. He motioned for him to pick up another shovel and join him. A terror came over him and he moved back up the stairs and to the safety of his bed.

He listened as Popo climbed the stairs from the basement and said something to the old woman. She uttered a short vicious laugh. Next, he heard the backdoor open and Popo's heavy footsteps on the porch. He listened to the footsteps and traced the route in his mind. Across the porch, down the steps, and along the path to the gate. Every day. The gate slammed shut and he could now see Popo walking slowly—stooped over as if the lunchbox he carried weighed a hundred pounds. His gray head bobbed up and down and under his left arm was the brown safety hat. He watched Popo walk past the rows of narrow red houses and down the street till Popo disappeared through the gate at the mill.

Then he slipped back onto his pillow and pulled the feather tick tightly around him. His eyes closed, but after what seemed like hours, he opened them again and stared at the ceiling. It was white.



## ASSIGNMENT

Start with a generous sized sheet  
Of transparent mylar or acetate  
A centimeter more on each side  
Than the man you have to cover.

You will find him in the Molex Terminal.  
He won't be the best fist heard that night  
And he might zig and zag out of phase.  
You will have to be as accurate as the crystal  
To avoid moonbounce and attain  
Those close tolerances.

If you are using india ink  
And have to change his features,  
The easiest way I have found  
Is to scratch off the faulty part  
With the blade of a sharp knife  
Being careful not to damage the mylar.

You may then walk into the idling propellor.  
We will send home a corporal and a flag.

## **CROWDS**

It is not granted to everyone to bathe in the multitude: to enjoy the crowd is an art; and he alone, at the expense of the human race, can have a drinking bout of vitality, into whom a fairy has blown in his cradle the taste for disguise and mask, hatred for his dwelling place and passion for travel.

Multitude, solitude: equal and convertible expressions for the active and prolific poet. He who doesn't know how to people his solitude, doesn't know either how to be alone in a bustling crowd.

The poet enjoys this incomparable privilege, that he can be himself and other people, as he pleases. Like those wandering souls who search for a body, he enters, when he wishes, the character of everyone. For him alone, everything is tenantless; and if certain places seem to be closed to him, it's that in his eyes they aren't worth the trouble of being visited.

The solitary and pensive stroller draws a singular intoxication from this universal communion. He who easily embraces the crowd knows feverish enjoyments, of which the egoist, closed like a coffer, and the sluggard, confined like a mollusk, will be eternally deprived. He adopts as his own all the professions, all the joys and all the miseries that circumstance presents him.

What men call love is quite small, quite restrained and quite feeble, compared with this ineffable orgy, this blessed prostitution of the soul that gives its entire self wholly, poetry and charity, to the unforeseen that appears, to the unknown that passes on.

It is good sometimes to teach the happy people of this world, were it only to humiliate for one instant their foolish pride, that there are felicities superior to theirs, more vast and more exquisite. Founders of colonies, pastors of peoples, missionary priests exiled to the end of the world, doubtlessly know something of these mysterious intoxications; and, in the bosom of the vast family that their genius has made for itself, they must laugh sometimes at those who pity them for their so unsettled fortunes and for their so chaste lives.

*Translated by Enid Rhodes Peschel*



## RAINING ON THE LAKE

Raining like the time the creek flooded  
the boat livery and all those rowboats  
drifted to Lexington and Port Sanilac,  
waves swimming against them, stripping  
the paint off the sides. One of the boats  
they never found is anchored under sand,  
hours from shore. Another is still steering  
for Canada.

And even I know what it's like to drift,  
to drown in coldness, to be crying on the docks,  
blind and alone, the water pounding in my face,  
the silence screaming between temples.

I stand on the cliff, a willow tree  
pulling half the road into water. There is  
a woman stumbling drunk at Smitty's, kicking  
her car, swearing at it to go home. Out in  
the middle of the lake I see an old father  
rocking in a rowboat, his arms climbing above  
his head, the water swallowing everything.





THIS LETTER WAS SENT IN 1855 TO PRESIDENT PIERCE  
BY CHIEF SEALTH OF THE DUWAMISH TRIBE OF THE  
STATE OF WASHINGTON

J.S. 1976

perhaps because I am a savage & do not understand - the clatter only seems to insult the ears. And what is there to life if a man cannot hear the lovely cry of the whippoorwill or the arguments of the frogs around a pond at night? The Indian prefers the soft sound of the wind darting over the face of the pond, & the smell of the wind itself cleansed by a mid-day rain, or scented by a pinon pine.

THE AIR IS PRECIOUS TO THE REDMAN. For all things share the same breath - the beasts, the trees, & the man. The white man does not seem to notice the air he breathes. Like a man dying for many days, he is numb to the stench.

If I decide to accept, I will make one condition. The white man must treat the beasts of this land as his brothers. I am a savage & I do not understand any other way. I have seen thousands of rotting buffaloes on the prairie left by the white man who shot them from a passing train. I am a savage & I do not understand how the smoking iron horse can be more important than the buffalo that we kill only to stay alive. What is man without the beasts?

IF ALL THE BEASTS WERE GONE, MEN WOULD DIE FROM A GREAT LONLINESS OF SPIRIT, for whatever happens to the beast also happens to the man.

ALL THINGS ARE CONNECTED. WHATEVER BEFALLS THE EARTH BEFALLS THE SONS OF THE EARTH.

Our sons have seen their fathers humbled in defeat. Our warriors have felt shame. And after defeat they turn their days in idleness & contaminate their bodies with sweet food and strong drink.



It matters little where we spend the rest of our days - they are not many. A few more hours, a few more winters & none of the children of the great tribes that once lived on this earth, or that roamed in small bands in the woods will remain to mourn the graves of a people once as powerful & hopeful as yours.

One thing we know that the white man may one day discover: **OUR GOD IS THE SAME GOD.** You may think that you own him as you wish to own our land. But you cannot. He is the Body of man. And his compassion is equal for the red man & the white. This earth is precious to him. **AND TO HARM THE EARTH IS TO HEAP CONTEMPT UPON ITS CREATOR.** The whites, too, shall pass - perhaps sooner than other tribes. Continue to contaminate your bed, & you will one night suffocate in your own waste. When the buffalo are all slaughtered, the wild horses all tamed, the secret corners of the forest heavy with the scent of many men, & the view of the ripe hills blotted by the talking wires, **WHERE IS THE THICKET? GONE. WHERE IS THE EAGLE? GONE. AND WHAT IS IT TO SAY GOODBYE TO THE SWIFT AND THE HUNT, THE END OF LIVING & THE BEGINNING OF SURVIVAL.**

We might understand if we knew what it was the white man dreams, what hopes he describes to his children on long winter nights, what visions he burns into their minds so they will wish for tomorrow. But we are savages. The white man's dreams

are hidden from us. And because they are hidden, we will go our own way. If we agree, it will be to secure your reservation you have promised. There, perhaps we may live out our brief days as we wish. When the last redman has vanished from the earth, & the memory is only the shadow of a cloud passing over the prairie, these shores and forests will still hold the spirits of my people, for they love this earth as the newborn loves its mother's heart beat. If we sell you our land, love it as we have loved it. Care for it as we have cared for it. Hold in your memory the way the land is as you take it. And with all your strength, with all your might, & with all your heart. **PRESERVE IT FOR YOUR CHILDREN, AND LOVE IT AS GOD LOVES US ALL.** One thing we know - our God is the same. The earth is precious to Him. Even the white man cannot be exempt from the common destiny.



Jacqueline Svaren is a native Oregonian. Born in Bend, Oregon, she now lives with her husband & four children in Happy Valley, Oregon.

She has studied calligraphy for nineteen years & is now teaching at Portland Community College.

*WRITTEN LETTERS* is a workbook for calligraphers written out by Jacqueline Svaren. The book contains 22 historically based alphabets. The text throughout is written in italic & the entire book is reproduced as written without reproductions or white paint corrections.

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## THE HARD PART IS GETTING AROUND TO IT

I didn't put up the storm windows  
this winter. I took a year to get to  
fixing the toilet. My showerhead trickles  
four streamlets. It is all I can do  
to water the houseplants, replace burned-out  
lightbulbs and trim my toenails.

Half our vegetables were left  
in the garden. The yard grew and grew  
slick with rotten apples. Squirrels ate all  
the walnuts. The leaves drifted eventually  
into neat piles. One trashcan rolled into  
the drive a month ago. I steer around it.

This house bulges with uncompleted  
projects: Furniture in stages  
of refinishing, woodwork half-  
stripped, a bird feeder I've been going to  
build, blocks for the baby that need  
the final varnish—I needn't go on.

Peanut butter sandwiches are very little  
trouble. The dishes pile up slowly. I bathe  
rarely and shave one a week, change my socks  
when my wife complains. There are plenty  
of things half-read and half-written.  
It is doubtful I shall ever finish this poem.

## FROM WHAT COUNTRY

From what country are you,  
asleep among everyday things with their thirsty mouths,  
life bitten by dreams,  
and that grief you bear without shame down the avenue of monuments  
where forgotten gods and goddesses  
lift arms that are not there and looks of marble.

The old woman was spinning in her garden of ashes;  
mud walls, quagmires, howls at dusk,  
ivies, and cambrics, stiffened there,  
as they watched those flying wheels  
toward which the clay raised a threatening fist.

The country is a name;  
nothing will change if you, born just now, come  
to the north, to the south, to the mist, to the lights;  
your destiny will be to listen to what  
the shadows leaning over your crib have to say.

One hand will give you the power of smiling,  
another will give you spiteful tears,  
another the knife of experience,  
another the desire that turns inward, forming the pool  
of wasted things under your life,  
where snakes, water-lillies, insects, guilty thoughts, break the surface,  
corrupting your lips, the purest thing you have.

Then you won't be able to kiss with innocence,  
nor give life to the realities that cry out to you with tireless tongue.  
Stop, stop, you who are ragged with stars,  
Die while you still have time.

*Translated by John Haines*



## VERY HANDSOME MEN

Tina watched a few big rabbits coming out of the brush and sitting up still as statues in the sunlight. She supposed this was more interesting than the beach. It was too windy on the beach, and besides, the tide was coming in. You weren't allowed to sit on the dike and watch the waves. A sign in Flemish or Dutch said so. A grassy pasture led from the dunes behind the dike down to a salt marsh where the bushes looked like sage brush and the dirt where there wasn't any grass was streaked with white. Seepage from the dike, Tina decided. Part of the marsh was fenced off, and some people with binoculars stood at the fence and watched birds. It was some sort of fish or bird preserve, or perhaps it was a rabbit warren.

She reached to touch Janine's hand to point out the rabbits, but Janine was watching two men walk by, so she pulled her hand back. *Lapin à la moutarde*. She had seen that on a menu somewhere. She'd probably have that. She wondered if restaurants raised the rabbits or if waiters were sent out at night to knock some over the head. The rabbits looked like they'd sit still enough. She couldn't really ask a waiter where the rabbits came from. He'd look surprised and lie, or else he'd pretend he didn't hear and say, "That's right, Miss," and then have something urgent to do. Perhaps she would come out here and wait and watch to see if anyone hunted them.

Janine smiled and waved to the two men. One of them, the fat one, was older and wore a loose windbreaker to hide his paunchy belly. The other man was handsome and had a nice tan. He was wearing a red pullover and had pushed the sleeves up past his elbows. Pink trousers, white shoes. Perhaps he had only been playing golf. They waved back. Janine waved again. Tina leaned closer to Janine and said in a deep movie star voice, "*Je t'aime ma chérie, je t'aime.*"

"Stop it," Janine said, and smiled at the men. They kept walking.

"Do you want to go to Bruges tomorrow?" Tina asked, "We could take the train and be back here for dinner if you like."

"I don't know."

Janine kept plucking at her sweater and brushing sand from her jeans. Tina watched the countryside. Flat as the ocean. Green. All that pasture and all those milk cows. In the distance a dark line of



trees blocked at least a sea of pasture from her view.

"I kind of like the beach," Janine said, "What's in Bruges?"

"A cathedral. Canals. There's supposed to be jousting."

"Oh yeah? What's that?"

Tina could hardly keep from smiling. The only things that really broke the flatness were the points of church steeples in the distance and the hotels down the beach to her left. They didn't seem very tall.

"You know. A couple of knights beat each other with sticks until one of them falls off his horse. Like in Camelot."

They watched an old fat man (there were a lot of them) walk his dog. One of those short-haired bowlegged ones that are supposed to be dangerous. The kind you didn't dare let in the same room with a baby. Tina wondered if she could remember what the French for "curb your dog" was. Something stupid and literal that sounded pretty funny when translated stupidly and literally back into English.

"Make your dog do in the gutter, Mister," she said.

"Yeah, Mister, ocean your dog," Janine said loudly. "Give me a cigarette," she added.

"You're supposed to be quitting," Tina said and held out the pack and then took one herself.

"I know."

The wind blew strands of Janine's hair into her eyes and she shook her head and faced the breeze. She knew she had lovely hair. Tina blew smoke out through her nostrils and smiled. What a difference a cigarette could make when you really needed it. She knew why Janine was always quitting — to deprive herself just enough to make every one taste so good. There was something about the flatness that reminded Tina of something else. The wind blew smoke-like wisps of sand off the tops of the dunes near the dike. That's what it was. The wind. The flatness and the wind. It was just like the desert, except for the dike, of course.

And there was the man with his dog. Tina might have to go to the bathroom pretty soon, too. Something. *Avoir envie*. "To want to wee-wee," according to her French-English dictionary. Tina couldn't imagine it ever being a matter of *wanting* to. If she had to, she could go in the bushes. That was one nice thing about Europe. Everyone would politely look away and not whisk her off to jail. The Swedish girl she had learned all the French slang from had said that she'd seen a group of nuns in Paris form a circle at the curb and when they walked away, one of them had left a little puddle right there on the

sidewalk. Two miles to the hotels and not a single bathroom between here and there. Of course she could hold it if she really had to. That is, if she had to go in the first place. She stood and brushed sand from her jeans.

"I'm going to walk across the border a few more times," she said. She really only needed to walk around a bit.

She went in the opposite direction from the hotels. On the walkway the border was marked by a post painted red and white. In stripes like a barber's pole. She walked up to it and drew a line across the path with her foot. She hopped back and forth across the line a few times, then stood straddling the border for a while.

"Dear Grandmother, Imagine yourself standing in Indiana and Illinois at the same time, only they speak different languages in the two states. Like standing in Texas and Mexico at once! I walked into Holland and back 742 times. It was exciting! Love always, Tina." The hotel gift shop would have just the right card.

She imagined having to speak Dutch out of one side of her mouth and French out of the other. But most of the people in Knokke spoke Flemish, not French, and she didn't know any Flemish or Dutch. She put her back against the post and slid down until she was half sitting.

"I'll have a little trim, please," she tried to say out of one side of her mouth. "*Salaud, pas comme ça!*" she tried to say out of the other. English was easier in asides to the audience, she decided. She stood up and walked away in a huff, glancing back over her shoulder at the invisible, shrugging barber.

There were two men with Janine. One of them, a very handsome man, was squatting beside her and smiling and offering her a cigarette. The other man stood behind them and smiled as if he didn't understand what they were saying. He had thick glasses and it seemed with that silly grin that he couldn't see them either. *Complètement aveugle*. Janine always attracted handsome men. They liked women with big breasts. It had something to do with male beauty and calcium deficiency, Tina thought. She took long steps like a movie star as she approached them.

"This is Franz," Janine said and the squatting man nodded, "And that's Wim. He's a doctor. They were in Africa when I was. Isn't that something?"

"Well, Mr. Stanley, it isn't every day we get to meet a great explorer," Tina said to Franz. Janine grimaced and held up one hand



as if to shield her head. "Please introduce me to your friend," Tina continued, "A doctor? Oh no, it couldn't be. . ."

She looked over at the standing man, Wim, who politely coughed into his fist, and she let her mouth drop open a little. Then she turned quickly back to Franz. "I am the Pope's daughter. You may kiss my ring," she said and held out her hand.

Franz just glared up at her. That was the problem with this country. Too many Catholics. Even those with no faith were still way too superstitious. Janine hid her face in her hands. Tina shrugged and stepped around her and took Mr. Wim Livingstone by the arm. He quickly said something to Franz in Flemish or Dutch and received a curt reply. *Ver dommen* or *verboden* or something. Tina didn't know. When Wim looked at her his smile didn't lose any of its fixedness.

"*Vous ne parlez pas l'anglais, n'est-ce pas?*" she said, leading him away from the others.

"*Ah, non,*" he said. He could read a little English, that was all.

He wasn't a very handsome man. He wasn't fat, but he was big in a round sort of way and had little pale, hairless hands. His long, curly hair was thin and when he smiled it was obvious he needed his teeth cleaned. Besides being practically blind and not knowing any English. No, he wasn't attractive at all.

"What are you doing here?"

"I'm on vacation," he said, "Like everyone." He was a doctor. A jungle surgeon in a little hospital in the Congo. Which would be fairly interesting if he were attractive.

"I'm a rich heiress," Tina said, "My father is a cattle baron. Ever hear of the Marquis de North Dakota?"

He hadn't. He didn't have a radio. This was his first vacation in four years. It was hard to keep up with the news *en brousse*. If she would please excuse him he had to be getting back to his friend.

"Well, good-bye, Dr. Wim," she said and turned and began walking in the direction of the hotels. Nice talking to you. Be sure to tell Janine to meet me at the café.

Tina thought she'd wear her long black dress to dinner and afterward change back into her jeans. Only thin, short-haired blondes looked best in black. No matter how many times Kate Smith sang "God Bless America" on T.V., Tina wouldn't be convinced that big women looked good in dark colors. But then, they usually knew so little about fashion. Janine might look good in orange or pale blue or purple or even red. Or very best in a wide striped combination of them all.



Tina sat at a table in an outdoor café on a stone parapet overlooking the beach. It was deserted. A gull planed over the grey-green water. Except for an older man dressed in black she was the only customer. She couldn't tell if the man was attractive or not, but she didn't think so. He sat facing her at the farthest table. He had a narrow head and a kind of pasty complexion and was very thin. Perhaps he was tubercular.

The waiter arrived and she ordered a cup of coffee and a *gaufre*. If Janine were there she would have ordered one of those cream-filled puff pastries. The ones with the glazed strawberries on top that Janine liked so much but was trying to deprive herself of. Tubby, the world's fattest man, weighed over a thousand pounds and attracted millions. Even princes and movie stars came to see him. That was Janine's problem. No real sense of sacrifice. The man in black seemed to be winking at her. Or maybe it was just a nervous tic. Tina decided that she had to go to the bathroom after all and got up and went into the hotel.

The waiter was standing at her table and looking around in all directions when she came back and sat down. The nervous man was still there, but he didn't really seem to be staring at her. Tina took some bills from her pocket and flattened them on the table. The young prince or king in uniform pictured on the money was very handsome. *Merci, mademoiselle*. The waiter replaced the bills with some coins picturing the same man.

From the street a long-haired (but fairly nice-looking) young man dressed in a faded blue shirt and jeans approached her table. He was carrying an orange knapsack.

"Excuse me, Miss," he said, "I couldn't help but notice that you're. . ."

"*Desolée, monsieur*," she interrupted, shrugging her shoulders and pointing to her ear, "*Je ne comprends pas l'anglais*." She smiled beautifully as he backed away mumbling. She should have had a cigarette in her hand. That would have been more elegant. She lit one and tried again. A beautiful smile with an exhalation of smoke in the direction of the receding backpack. Perhaps if she bought some of those high boots and rolled up her jeans to mid-calf like the Parisian girls, that kind of mistake wouldn't happen.

Americans. She certainly hadn't come to Europe to meet *them*. All they wanted to do was complain and rut in a sleeping bag on a beach

or in some public park. But the French weren't much better. *They* liked to feel you up in dark alleys. And Italians were just butt-pinching fairies.

She was getting a little disappointed with her tour. It hadn't been a success. She hadn't met a single baron or prince. Or even a cat-burglar for that matter. She'd have settled for a movie star if he were a handsome man like that French fellow, Belmondo. Though she couldn't see why everyone raved so much about his acting. Actually, acting is so easy, don't you think, Mr. Belmondo? After all, it isn't like painting which takes so much *talent*, ha-ha. All it takes is mood, *n'est-ce pas*, Belmondo? And of course, as Mr. Belmondo and I were just saying, one has to be able to recognize a moment of tension. Take Janine here, for instance. (Pause to elegantly exhale smoke.) She'll never be able to act because, well, I really hate to tell you this to your face, but frankly, Janine, darling, you just don't know tension when you see it.

Janine came up to the table and plopped down in a chair.

"I'm so mad at you!" she said, resting her elbow on the tabletop. She leaned toward Tina. "You almost ruined *everything*! Tina, why do you have to be so rude?"

"I think I'll have another cup of coffee and maybe a pastry of some sort. Want one? We can always have a late dinner."

"All right," Janine said. "What got into you anyway? It seems like every time I meet someone nice you have to start acting so *bizarre*."

Tina ordered two coffees and asked the waiter to bring out an assortment of pastries and cakes so they could choose what they wanted. She turned and smiled at Janine.

"Really, Janine, what did you expect? Did you ever take a look at good Dr. Wimpus or whatever his name was? I could see a mile off he wasn't my type."

"Well you didn't have to try and spoil it for *me*!"

Tina reached across the table and touched Janine's hand. "Didn't he remind you of that little man in the Popeye cartoons? The one that eats all the hamburgers?"

"Well, I guess he wasn't very attractive, but I'm sure he was nice."

"Nice? He was dreadful. Do you know what he said to me?"

"What?"

"*Mademoiselle*, I weeeel gladly pay you Tuesday for one, ow you zay in Am rica, ambergaire, *aujourd'hui*."

"Oh Tina," Janine said, "I'm sure he wasn't all that bad."



Tina looked around and didn't see the waiter anywhere. It would probably be a little while. The slowness of French-speaking waiters is a function of their language: *travail*, to work, from the latin, *trepalium*, instrument of torture. In the kitchen, the cook was breaking the poor waiter's bones. Tina offered Janine a cigarette.

"No thanks, I'm quitting," Janine said.

Didn't Janine think it would be nice to dress up for dinner? Wearing slacks was so American. Janine nodded.

One arm in a sling, the waiter finally arrived with a tray of goodies. Tina suggested Janine try the cream cake. *Celui-là*. Next to her favorite kind. With a finger Janine indicated her choices and the waiter set down the platter. Using large silver tongs, he delicately placed them on her plate. Tina smiled. It was a wonderful afternoon.

At dinner Tina was stunning in her sleeveless black gown and Janine looked nice in the bright peach, pink and azure swirled chiffon Tina had convinced her to buy that afternoon. It set off the red in Janine's hair so nicely. The maître'd had placed them at a table near the center of the large dining area. He knew beauty when he saw it.

Tina noticed as she ate her oysters that a group of well dressed men, who were drinking after-dinner drinks and smoking cigars, were regarding her quite intently. And of course they were looking at Janine, too. But there weren't very many people in the restaurant. Having arrived so late, she couldn't really expect a crowd. It hadn't been her fault that no-one knew where *lapin à la moutarde* was served. She knew she had seen it on a menu. But it could have been in Paris or Nice now that she thought of it.

"Excuse me, *Monsieur*. Could you tell me of a restaurant that serves rabbit?"

This old gentleman couldn't say exactly. He and his wife never ate out. His wife made pretty good rabbit, though. He waved vaguely, toward the sea. Try one of those. They're sure to have it. His dog barked in agreement. She and Janine looked at the menus on the doors of at least a million places.

An old tweedy man and an equally tweedy dog. Grrrrr. "Excuse us, *Monsieur*. Nice dog you have there. Bet he likes to chase rabbits. Speaking of rabbits. . . ."

A small boy had led them to this restaurant (where his uncle was a waiter, probably). Tina could tell by the heavy velvet drapes inside that it was expensive. Neatly printed on a sign in the window:

*Lapin de garenne à la sauce moutarde ..... 300F*

A la carte, no less. But since they had come this far. The group of men, business types she imagined, got up and moved out through the door that led into the street.

Janine ate in silence. She started her second soup, a mushroom *bouillon*, thin and clear with a faint odor of earth. It looked delicious. "You can come along, you know," she finally said.

"Oh no," Tina said, "I want to get a good night's sleep anyway. For the train ride, you know."

"You won't be in the way."

"I won't be there at all."

Tina noticed that there were only two other couples in the whole restaurant. Humorless Franz and Fat Wim were probably waiting at the hotel. Janine excused herself to go make a phone call. "I'd best let him know where I am," she said.

Janine was really wasting her time, Tina thought. There was nothing so special about Franz. But then, Janine tended always to see more in a man than there really was. She still raved about some fellow, Jack, who she had met in Africa. The waiter arrived with the main course and Tina asked if it was *lapin sauvage* or if it was tame.

"*Comme dit la carte, mademoiselle, 'y a du lapin de garenne,*" the waiter said.

"*C'est domestique?*"

"*Non, mademoiselle, c'est pas domestique.*"

The waiter smiled. They always smiled. *De garenne* might mean "factory fresh" for all she knew. She smiled.

"Would you please bring me another spoon?" she asked. "This one is spotted."

She held up the spoon to the light and he plucked it out of her fingers and coolly walked away. French was such a nice language for nastiness. Janine returned and sat down and sipped her wine. Franz would meet her here.

The rabbit was very good. And done just right. Tina pulled long strands of flesh away from the bones and dipped the meat into the sauce. The mustard made it savory and hot, and the sauce was smooth on the roof of her mouth. Somehow the aftertaste was not that of spice, but of the meat. Tina chewed slowly; Janine attacked her rabbit, eating it quickly with big bites.

A noisy motorcycle sped past outside. Above their table, the chandelier tinkled to the vibrations of the *bruit*. Tina smiled and laid



down her knife and fork.

"Well, I certainly hope that young man's motorcycle starts in the morning," she said.

Janine sat up straight, "Oh me too," she said, swallowing, "I hope he doesn't have an accident. You know, like go through a plate glass window and be horribly scarred." She drank some wine.

"Not me. I hope he doesn't fall down and skid his face a hundred yards on the pavement."

"Or hit a child and have to regret it the rest of his life."

"Yes, poor boy," Tina sighed and sipped her wine, "better that he's instantly killed."

They each cupped a hand to an ear and leaned ever so slightly in the direction of the street and listened carefully to the traffic outside. Janine was being so pleasant.

Janine hurried through the salad course and the fruit courses and skipped desert and coffee. She gulped down the rest of the wine in her glass and said, "Gotta run. Franz is at the cafe next door."

"Have a good time," Tina said and smiled. Odd that he hadn't presented himself at table like a proper gentleman. Janine stood and began to fumble in her purse and Tina just waved her away, saying, "I've enough. We'll settle it later. Go on."

Tina lingered over her *soufflé aux fraises*. Of course Janine would have to tell a man like Franz right from the start to keep his hands off. But telling someone with no character flat out, no sex, didn't always mean it worked out that way. You couldn't count on every handsome man to be a gentleman. She drank two cups of coffee, very slowly, and a plate of cheeses was brought. She had a slice of a soft one that she thought would be camembert but it turned out to have a mild walnut flavor. Then she had some gruyère. Then some brie. Then another soft cheese flavored with garlic and caraway. She could stay in Europe for years just for the cheese alone, she thought.

Final coffee and a brandy. Then she smoked. She didn't like people who smoked between courses. Janine did that sometimes. *L'addition*. Payed with a handsome *pourboire* for the maître'd. When she got up from the table she felt a little logy. But the crisp night air and the walk back to her hotel snapped her right out of it.

She was wide awake and didn't feel like sleeping at all. Too much coffee, perhaps. She changed into her sweater and jeans and flopped down on top of the bed. Reading was no good. She didn't feel like

reading. Too late for T.V. She looked up *garenne* in her French dictionary.

noun, feminine (lat. *wareнна*, a prelatinate word)

1: Rabbit producing factory, usually made of sand or wood. 2: That part of a river or stream reserved for fishing.

*garennisque* adj. Having the qualities of a rabbit factory or fishing preserve.

*garennisquement* adv. Rabbit-factory like in action.

*se garennier* v. To rapidly change or transform oneself into a fishing preserve or rabbit factory.

She got up from the bed and put on her car coat and gloves and then searched through her suitcase for the flashlight *Europe on \$10 a Day* recommended every traveler carry. Ten dollars and then another ten or maybe as much as twenty or thirty for food if one wanted to do it right, Tina thought. The whole point was to relax, to enjoy. She could see skimping here and there on hotels but never on food. She wanted none of that. After starving a couple of days who could look at a cathedral and not see gingerbread?

The beach was different at night. The dunes weren't the same. Too many shadows. The sound of the ocean seemed louder than in the daytime, more ominous. Probably because that's all there was. The sound of water. As Tina moved away from the hotels she switched on her flashlight. It wasn't really necessary. The clouds reflected a muddy yellow glow from the city lights. She wouldn't trip, but she felt safer with the light on.

There seemed to be quite a number of couples out there in the sand. She certainly hoped it didn't rain later tonight, at least not in torrents. After she had walked a long time, she noticed ghosts of bushes in the warren ahead of her. It seemed so barren, so much like a desert. She half-expected to see snakes—the ones that always bite people lost in the desert. She stopped near where she and Janine had been that afternoon and turned off the light and waited.

Janine, she supposed, was having the time of her life. That is, if one could with someone like Franz. Janine seemed to always go for the same type: hairy men with muscles and dark suntans. Tina liked that, too, but she especially liked men with Clark Gable mustaches. The motorcycle fellow in *Les Bonne Femmes* had been ideal but she never did catch who played the part.

She bet old Jack from Africa had been tan and muscular. Tina bet he was just like Franz though the way Janine told it he'd practically



died for her. That was something special. She would like to have a man do that for her sometime. Give her his water so she could make it back to the outpost while he died in the desert. Or give her his coat so she wouldn't freeze while the dogs carried her on the sled through the blizzard to the Mountie station. And he saying, "Don't worry. I'll just build a little fire to keep warm." And the last time you see him he's gathering twigs in the snow. A fellow like that would break a girl's heart.

There was something moving in the brush. It made a lot of noise. There were lots of somethings crashing through the bushes. She quickly flashed on her light in the direction of the nearest sound and something froze at the dim end of the beam. She couldn't tell what it was, perhaps only a taller bush. She moved closer, keeping whatever it was frozen in her light.

It was a waiter. Tall, red-coated, he was wearing a ruffled shirt and an apron. He held a club high over his head and gripped a gunny sack in his other hand. At his feet a rabbit cringed, its red eyes glowing at her. She decided she didn't want to speak with him. She shined her light away and heard a quick thud.

Sending her beam dancing about the bushes she noticed several faint waiters who turned into statues or shadows as the light touched them.

"I don't think you should be out here, Miss," a man's voice said in French from behind her. She caught her breath and turned.

"Wim?"

In the distance a rabbit's high-pitched scream was quickly cut short. She trained her light on the man's eyes. It wasn't Wim. Even blinking and wagging his head from side to side in an attempt to shade his eyes this man was handsome. Clipped mustache. Square, clefted chin. He wore a light trenchcoat and a dark hat.

"I'm sorry officer," she said quickly and pointed the light at his chest. Of course he had to be an inspector or something to regulate the killing. After all, these people weren't barbarians. "I was just going for a walk," she added.

"You had better come away," he said and guided her with an arm around her shoulder, "This isn't anything for a woman to watch. All that blood and brutality."

Yes. He was very handsome. He had a deep melodic voice, like a French Gary Cooper. And the grip on her shoulder was confident,

protective. They headed back toward the hotels. She had a thousand things to ask him. Why red coats?

Required by law, he answered. Red coats and ruffled shirts, but the laws weren't specific about trousers. A waiter could wear knickers or kilts if he liked, and nothing could be done about it, although it was customary for everyone to wear black trousers with a satin stripe along the outseam.

She was fascinated. Of course if he acted like anything but a gentleman she'd have to lay it on the line, no sex. Not in the sand, anyway. He offered her a cigarette and lit it for her, then lit his own. She could see he had bushy eyebrows, always a sign of virility. *Seduire*, to seduce. In the French dictionary the synonyms were: to attract, captivate, enchant, bewitch, ravish, subjugate. The order in fairy tales with wicked princes. Perhaps he was a prince of a sort. She already felt a little bewitched.

He smiled. She couldn't see his teeth but she knew they must be nice. They walked along and she stopped and exhaled smoke deeply through her nostrils and touched his arm. She tossed her head like she'd seen Janine do. It was Janine's best gesture. Tina felt more attractive, even though she knew she didn't have the hair for it.

"Don't you just love the wind at night?" she said, "And the sound of the waves? I find it so romantic."

It hadn't been, she reflected as she smoked. It hadn't been romantic at all. She undressed and got into bed and thought she might wait for Janine to get back. She'd have to think of some way to make it all sound witty and interesting so that Janine would be impressed with how brave she'd been.

He was handsome, she thought, but his vocabulary gave him away. He suggested they do dirty things. No, she'd said, and slapped him lightly on the cheek to let him know she was a lady. He wasn't a gentleman, though. He grabbed her tightly by the arm and suggested something unmentionable. He used all the slang the Swedish girl had taught her and even some words she had to ask him to explain. *Faire un pompier*. Janine could never guess what *that* meant. She'd remained calm enough to cry. He let go of her arm and slapped her hard. That was when she was able to run away. Fortunately he wasn't able to follow her.

"I lost the flashlight," she would say to Janine. She wondered if she



should have a handkerchief and should blow her nose at that point or if that would be too melodramatic. A cigarette might be enough. Just stopping and coolly lighting a cigarette. Maybe she should begin packing her bags. One thing was settled. They'd be going to Bruges.

## ON THE MOUNTAIN

The hide is nailed  
upon the door.

The old bitch strains,  
licks a sore forepaw.

The pup trails asleep,  
hounds a first  
wild hunt into  
his hell of dream.

A low wind  
lifts the dust  
up off the floor,  
inches it  
toward the fire.  
The pup runs  
a spastic course,  
freezes and bays  
himself half awake.

The wind dies down;  
the fire sparks out.

The old bitch groans  
herself to sleep.

The hide is still nailed  
upon the door.



## REVIEWS

*Not Coming to Be Barked At*

Ted Kooser

Pentagram Press

Milwaukie, Wisconsin \$3.00 paperback

Understand just the title of this book by Ted Kooser, and it is like putting a key in a lock. For the phrase “not coming to be barked at” is, in its own way, a kind of affirmation. And what Kooser gives us, in poem after poem, is affirmation. Even here in the poem “Fort Robinson”:

When I visited Fort Robinson,  
where Dull Knife and his Northern Cheyenne  
were held captive that terrible winter,  
the grounds crew was killing the magpies.

Two men were going from tree to tree  
with sticks and ladders, poking the young birds  
down from their nests and beating them to death  
as they hopped about in the grass.

Under each tree where the men had worked  
were twisted clots of matted feathers,  
and above each tree a magpie circled,  
crazily calling in all her voices.

We didn't get out of the car.  
My little boy hid in the back and cried  
as we drove away, into those ragged buttes  
the Cheyenne climbed that winter, fleeing.

Even here something is salvaged and learned. For a few lines at least, it is that winter, we are Cheyenne.

Kooser's voice and tone is almost always subdued—down home and ordinary. It is a voice that seems to come precisely from the country it speaks of, from Nebraska, cornfields, wheat. It has that calm, and sweep of distance. Yet even within this almost flat tone, and perhaps because of it, Kooser's poems have a greater impact than one might first suspect:

## There Is Always A Little Wind

—for Debra Hulbert

There is always a little wind  
in a country cemetery,  
even on days when the air stands  
still as a barn in the fields.

You can see the old cedars  
stringy and tough as maiden aunts,  
taking the little gusts of wind  
in their aprons like sheaves of wheat,

and hear above you the warm  
and regular sweep of wheat being cut  
and gathered, the wagons creaking,  
the young men breathing at their work.

Pentagram Press has printed a handsome book, and Ted Kooser has filled it with poems that matter. The best of them will stay with you for a long time.

*Lex Runciman*

### *Braided Apart*

Kim Robert and William Stafford  
Confluence Press, Inc.  
Lewiston, Idaho \$3.50 paperback

For native Oregonians, few books will ever bring them closer to home than this one by Kim Robert and William Stafford. Partly it is Kim's remarkable photographs, but mostly it's the recurring natural elements of landscape and weather—the familiar lush vegetation, the common rain. Both Staffords can tap this natural wealth at will:

You can't see it in summer, cruising the river  
road with an eye for water birds, the hills  
green and deep above; but in winter light  
when the trees are bare but for their bones  
each driver's eye is drawn to the old road  
curving through moss and cliffs of evergreen fern.

(Kim's "Old Siuslaw Road")



But there is much more going on in these poems, more than just landscape, as in Bill's "Remembering A First Grade Music Teacher", where the landscape and the human reflect each other:

Her non-representational near face  
fixed my gaze on local dramatics—  
the old skin, lines of storm and calm, eyebrows.  
And there behind her glasses, in those lakes that  
forgot summer, I found the numb center, then slid  
away, outward, upward, outward . . .

The service of those stern ones, the knowers,  
the ones who demand a further note,  
has lifelong set me toward islands,  
toward fields tested by nothing but grass,  
toward stones at the coast that hold amid waves.  
And in church I never sing.

What the Staffords do, at their frequent best, is not just describe a landscape, but create it, and create inside it a human world. The result is nothing less than a string of small masterpieces. Poems like Kim's "A Story I Remember Hearing That No One Told" and Bill's "At the Coast" do what only the best poems can do, they give us something of our own lives.

To say this is a book just for Oregonians, or just for Northwesterners, would be an injustice and a lie. It *is* a book that's regional, but regional in the best sense, located where we live:

One moment each noon, faced  
where the sun is, turn  
from events to the church in the stone.  
The shade under your hand  
welcomes you. Let the lamp  
in your forehead explode.

In the long dive of your life  
past the sun, these are important,  
these meetings. Repeat:  
"Rescue me, Day. Hills,  
hold the light." Lift your hand.  
Let the dark out.

(Bill's "The Saint of Thought")

*Braided Apart* is the first book out from Confluence Press (they also publish *Slackwater Review*). We can only hope it's an indication of things to come.

*Lex Runciman*

*Instructions to the Double*

Tess Gallagher

Graywolf Press

Port Townsend, Washington, \$4.00 paperback

Tess Gallagher speaks in her poems with personal, intimate voices. Many of the poems draw you in like a familiar gesture. They make you feel as if you had known this poem well before yet only now are you beginning to see how much deeper than its first warmth this intimacy is, a close friend become a closer friend. Here is a second voice which seems nearly your own, and yet it is capable of teaching, of explaining, of deepening. And it is this voice which haunts and enriches these poems and at times, as in the title poem, surfaces and speaks directly with an amazing power.

Instructions to the Double

So now it's your turn,  
little mother of silences, little  
father of half-belief. Take up  
this face, these daily rounds  
with a cabbage under each arm  
convincing the multitudes  
that a well-made-anything  
could save them. Take up  
most of all, these hands  
trained to an ornate piano  
in a house on the other side  
of the country.

I'm staying here  
without music, without  
applause. I'm not going  
to wait up for you. Take  
your time. Take mine  
too. Get into some trouble  
I'll have to account for. Walk  
into some bars alone  
with a slit in your skirt. Let  
the men follow you on the street  
with their clumsy propositions, their  
loud hatreds of this and that. Keep  
walking. Keep your head  
up. They are calling you—slut, mother,  
virgin, whore, daughter, adultress, lover,



mistress, bitch, wife, cunt, harlot,  
betrothed, Jezebel, Messalina, Diana,  
Bethsheba, Rebecca, Lucretia, Mary,  
Magdalena, Ruth, you—Niobe,  
woman of the tombs.

Don't stop for anything, not  
a caress or a promise. Go  
to the temple of the poets, not  
the one like a run-down country club,  
but the one on fire  
with so much it wants  
to be done with. Say all the last words  
and the first; hello, goodbye, yes,  
I, no, please, always, never.

If anyone from the country club  
asks if you write poems, say  
your name is Lizzie Borden.  
Show him your axe, the one  
they gave you with a silver  
blade, your name engraved there  
like a whisper of their own.

If anyone calls you a witch,  
burn for him; if anyone calls you  
less or more than you are  
let him burn for you.

It's a dangerous mission. You  
could die out there. You  
could live forever.

As usual, Graywolf Press has done a fine job of printing these poems. *Instructions to the Double* is a handsome book. Tess Gallagher's poems deserve such a home. The voices in this book will be with you for a long time. These poems talk back. Visit them.

*Rich Ives*

*Anxiety and Ashes*

Laura Jensen

Penumbra Press

Lisbon, Iowa

Cloth over boards, \$17.50, Strathmore wrappers \$8.50

In many of Laura Jensen's poems there is a moving away from the initiating subject which takes us along a trail of accumulating surprises until we have entered the world of the poem. The poet holds a deeper meaning carefully at a considered distance until the poem has established a context for it to emerge from.

Here is a voice with a confidence in the knowledge of suffering, more humane than philosophical.

Tantrum

Nothing likes to pay.  
Trees do not like to pay.  
Wind beats the flowers  
from black branches.  
It never hears the cries of 'mine!'  
It blows the day apart  
and already the past is restless.  
Now the night is simultaneously  
new and used. In the dark  
cats plan their movements,  
but slip away when  
shouts take passengers  
into the terrifying air.  
The body takes the throat  
like an enemy tower.

At the end of the tunnel  
the moon sees me crippled  
and the sun sees me horribly deformed.  
There has been hysteria  
shaking the leaves of the willow.  
From far off I hear you  
as hail rattles on a board fence,  
as the telephone wires  
take the snow to be a mountain.

And even in the midst of a strategy of surprises there is subtlety, as in "Out the Door":



Good morning,  
you are with the snow in the branches  
with a life of beauty, liberty and peril.  
Measures of snow will drop off like babies  
to a lullaby, branches will toss without wind,  
far into the day, into good evening. Then,  
at best, you are shadowed not by the planet,  
but by a single leaf or a single hair.

Goat hair is coarse, short, close  
to the skull, the upholstery of a chair.  
You did snap shut your purse at the aviary,  
at the carving in an ivory horn, a brittle  
price and a brittle beak and a brittle tusk.

Sing around the corner, mornings,  
crane around in a gown with perfect stitches.  
The birds are invisible, in another shell, and  
a waterfall beats with a heart's obligation.  
If there is anything to willingly care for,  
it is the candle in the hand of the gown,  
buoyant and stubborn in a starless passageway,  
something never overcome as it would overcome.

The risk Laura Jensen takes is that her surprises can be bewildering rather than revealing, but the individual accomplishment of her successful poems makes this a risk well worth taking.

*Rich Ives*

*The Private Life*

Lisel Mueller

Louisiana State University Press

Baton Rouge \$3.50 paperback

Lisel Mueller's truths are not the stuff of surrealism, but simply of a life. It is a life not without its own luck, as acknowledged in "Alive Together": "Speaking of marvels, I am alive/ together with you, when I might have been/ alive with anyone under the sun."

Balanced against such private affirmations are public intrusions, as in "Untitled", with its unexpected turn: "Don't ask me what/ switch in my mind flashed on,/ unbidden, the Algerian girl/ who had a

bottle jammed into her/ to make her talk,” or as below in “Late News”:

For months, I accept  
my smooth skin,  
my gratuitous life as my due;  
then suddenly, a crack—  
the truth seeps through like acid,  
a child without eyes to weep with  
weeps for me, and I bleed  
as if I were still human.

Throughout, the voice that speaks in these poems is reasoned and humane. There is no shouting, no hysterics or ravings. What lightens the book, and makes it so readable, is Mueller’s fine and peculiar wit. It shines in poems like “Sleepless” and “Love Like Salt”, and here in “Snow”:

Telephone poles relax their spines;  
sidewalks go under. The nightly groans  
of aging porches are put to sleep.  
Mercy sponges the lips of saints.

While we talk in the old concepts  
—time that was, and things that are—  
snow has leveled the stumps of the past  
and the earth has a new language.

It is like the scene in which the girl  
moves toward the hero  
who has not yet said, “Come here.”

Come here, then. Every ditch  
has been exalted. We are covered with stars.  
Feel how light they are, our lives.

*Lex Runciman*



*To Frighten a Storm*

Gladys Cardiff

Copper Canyon Press

Port Townsend, Washington, \$3.50 paperback

Gladys Cardiff is a poet of image worlds. Her poems are lyric, suggestive and visual. She is adept at creating a poetic scene through the use of carefully selected detail.

"I can see inside the door where the dim shapes  
Of bellows and tongs, rings and ropes hang on the wall,  
The place for fire, the floating anvil,  
Snakes of railroad steel, wheels in heaps,  
Piled like turtles in the dark corners."

In a few places the poems rely a bit too heavily on rather simple, nearly formulaic approaches, such as "Simple" which merely lists "cures", and "Balance Beam" which is about (you guessed it) writing poems, or on Indian heritage and background, such as "Prayer to Fix the Affections" in which the strongest lines are taken from *Sacred Formulas of the Cherokee* and the rest of the poem merely embellishes them. But even with these weaknesses the book remains strong. There is a long poem reminiscent of David Wagoner's "Guide to Dungeness Spit" that makes a love poem something more than a love poem, and a moving weave of a present day situation with a painting by Bruegel the Elder. And in "Leaves like Fish" there is a poetically successful philosophical meditation.

Leaves Like Fish

Cottonwood, willow and brier,  
Night air billows in the dark grove,  
Hauls the alders over, their leaves

Jumping, spilling silver-bellied on the lawn.  
The lighted wind is running with a flood  
of green fish, phosphorescent and wild

On the winter grass, breaking like struck matches,  
Without warmth or place, random as green minnows.  
Above the clouds the sky waits, one-celled,

Expanded over tides and winds, loving  
the south wind as much as the north,  
schooling the planets in discretion and form.

*To Frighten a Storm* is a promising first effort by a capable poet. Copper Canyon Press has again presented us with its standard of high quality work in producing the book. The Northwest is especially fortunate in having two excellent presses (Copper Canyon and Graywolf) which treat the process of producing books of poetry as the craft that it can and should be. That care combined with the talents of poets such as Gladys Cardiff gives the Northwest and the country a much needed view of books of poetry which are more than the token gestures of big business publishing.

*Rich Ives*



## CONTRIBUTORS

SONJA AKESSON is a contemporary Swedish poet.

J. CHRISTOPHER ANDERSON is a student in the University of Iowa Writers' Workshop and had a story called "The Rains" in *CutBank* 5.

JIM BARNES is co-editor of *The Chariton Review* and teaches at Northeast Missouri State College.

LEE BASSETT says he loves coffee and the cook with the bad eye. He has two chapbooks (*Unknown Tongues* and *Son of a Gun*) from Saltworks Press.

CHARLES BAUDELAIRE is a well known French poet of the 19th century. "Crowds" ("Les Foules") is from his collection, *Little Poems in Prose* (*Petits Poemes en Prose*) originally published in 1868.

INGER CASEY has studied Scandinavian Languages and World Literature at the University of Stockholm and now lives in New Hampshire.

SYLVIA CLARK is from Seattle. She is in the MFA program at the University of Montana and is co-editor of *Gilt Edge*.

LUIS CERNUDA is a twentieth century Spanish poet whose work has been receiving more attention recently in both Spain and the United States. He died in 1963.

WILLIAM VIRGIL DAVIS has published poems in a number of places and will have new ones out soon in *Carleton Miscellany*.

MADELINE DEFREES has a new book of poems, *When Sky Lets Go*, due in February from Braziller Press.

NORMAN DUBIE lives in Tempe, Arizona where he teaches at Arizona State University. His newest book is *Illustrations* from Braziller Press.

QUINTON DUVAL has poems recently out or forthcoming in *Quarterly West*, *New River Review*, and *Poetry Northwest*.

DAVID GRIFFITH is now living in Iowa after spending a year in Montana and is at work on a long poem in blank verse.

JOHN HAINES is in York, England on an Amy Lowell Traveling Fellowship. He is the author of four books of poems and a new chapbook (*In Five Years Time*) is now available as the first in the *CutBank Chapbook Series*.

MARC HUDSON is living in Seattle and working on a sequence of poems recalling a couple of seasons on Hood Canal. "Island" will be appearing overseas in *The Anglo-Welsh Review*.

DAVID JAMES has poems forthcoming in *Poetry Now*, *Hiram Poetry Review*, *Vagabond*, and *New Letters* and will appear in an anthology of Michigan poetry called *The Third Coast: Contemporary Michigan Poets*.

MATHEW KUZMICH recently graduated from San Diego State University and is now in the creative writing program at Bowling Green State University in Ohio.

JAY MEEK has published in a number of literary magazines including *Field*, *The Iowa Review*, and *The Paris Review*. Carnegie-Mellon University Press has just published his first book, *The Week the Dirigible Came*.

ENID RHODES PESCHEL has published translations of Rimbaud's *A Season in Hell* and *The Illuminations* (Oxford University Press) and edited a collection of essays, *Intoxication and Literature*, published as v. 50 of *Yale French Studies*. Her *Flux and Reflux: Ambivalence in the Poems of Arthur Rimbaud* is due in 1977 from Droz in Geneva.

PHILIP PIERSON has published widely and is seeking a publisher for a collection of poems he has recently completed.

RICHARD POTTER lives in Iowa City and doesn't have as much trouble writing poems as "The Hard Part is Getting Around to It" claims.

CAROLYN REICH has attended Flathead Community College in Kalispell, Montana and is now farming and enjoying herself in Whitefish, Montana. This is her first published poem.

RICK ROBBINS continues to assist in the editing of *Cafeteria* after a move from San Diego State to the University of Montana.

JACQUELINE SVAREN lives in Portland. Her book, *Written Letters*, is available from the Bond Wheelwright Company.

MARY SWANDER's chapbook, *Needlepoint*, will be the second in the *CutBank Chapbook Series*. Her poems have appeared in *The Nation*, *The Ohio Review*, and *Poetry* as well as *CutBank* 6 and 7.

CAROLYNE WRIGHT's poems and translations from the Spanish have appeared in numerous magazines. She is currently a teaching assistant and doctoral candidate at Syracuse University.

#### Books Received

*Anxiety and Ashes*, by Laura Jensen, poetry, Penumbra Press, \$8.50.

*Braided Apart*, by Kim Robert and William Stafford, poetry, photographs, Confluence Press, Inc., \$3.50.

*Chicago*, by Nils Nelson, poetry, Ironwood Press, \$1.50.

*First Things*, by J. K. Osborne, prosepoems, Querencia Books, \$5.00.

*The Glassblower's Breath*, by Thomas Lux, poetry, Cleveland State University Press, no price listed.

*Groceries*, by Herb Scott, poetry, Univ. of Pittsburgh Press, \$2.95.

*Instructions to the Double*, by Tess Gallagher, poetry, Graywolf Press, \$4.00.

*The Night of the Great Butcher*, by John Bennett, fiction, December Press, \$4.00.

*Not Coming To Be Barked At*, by Ted Kooser, poetry, Pentagram Press, \$3.00.

*Notes From Custer*, by Jim Heynen, poetry, translations, Bear Claw Press, \$2.95.

*Sentences*, by Vassilis Zambaras, poetry, Querencia Books, no price listed.

*The Terror of the Snows*, by Paul-Marie Lapointe, translated by D. G. Jones, poetry, Univ. of Pittsburgh Press, \$2.95.

*To Frighten a Storm*, by Gladys Cardiff, poetry, Copper Canyon Press, \$3.50.

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## Magazines Received

- Apple*, (No. 12, Final Issue), David Curry, ed., Box 2271, Springfield, Illinois 62705. \$1.25 ea.
- Bits*, (No. 4), poems under 12 lines, Robert Wallace, Dennis Dooley, Nicholas Ransom, Frederik N. Smith, eds., Dept. of English, Case Western Reserve Univ., Cleveland, Ohio 44106. 75¢ ea.
- Cafeteria*, (No. 7), Gordon Preston and Rick Robbins, eds., P. O. Box 16191, San Diego, California 92116. no price listed.
- The Carolina Quarterly*, (Spring/Summer 1976), Jeff Richards, ed., Box 1117, Chapel Hill, North Carolina 27514. \$4.50/3 issues.
- Colorado-North Review*, (Spring, 1976), Dennis Braden, ed., University Center, Univ. of Northern Colorado, Greeley, Colorado 80639. no price listed.
- Dacotah Territory*, (No. 12), Mark Vinz, ed., P. O. Box 775, Moorhead, Minnesota 56560. \$2.50/2 issues.
- Fiction*, (V. 4, No. 2), Mark Mirsky, ed., Dept. of English, City college of New York, Convent Ave. and 138th St., N. Y., N. Y. 10031. \$1.00 ea.
- Field*, (No. 14), Stuart Friebert and David Young, eds., Rice Hall, Oberlin College, Oberlin, Ohio 44074. \$4.00/2 issues.
- The Graham House Review*, (No. 1), Peter Balakian and Bruce Smith, eds., P. O. Box 489, Englewood, New Jersey 07631. \$2.50/2 issues.
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